JACK AMONG THE INDIANS

GEORGE BIRD GRINNELL

3386

Chilmark Public Library.

RULES.

1. This book may be kept out *Two Weeks.* Fine, two cents per day if kept over.

2. Do not tear the fly leaves. Make no marks of any kind in this book. It will be examined when returned, and all damage above a reasonable wear will be charged to the borrower.

3. All books must be returned to the Library on or before the *last Saturday* of January.

1924

AUG 1924

AUG 30 1924

OCT 15 1924

JUN 13 1925

JUN 12 1926

JUL 2

AUG

JUL 10 1932

AUG 10 1932

SEP 10 1932

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_T5-ARI-194

JACK AMONG THE INDIANS.

By the same Author

JACK THE YOUNG COWBOY
JACK THE YOUNG TRAPPER
JACK THE YOUNG CANOEMAN
JACK THE YOUNG EXPLORER
JACK IN THE ROCKIES
JACK AMONG THE INDIANS
JACK THE YOUNG RANCHMAN
PAWNEE HERO STORIES AND FOLK TALES
BLACKFOOT LODGE TALES
THE STORY OF THE INDIAN
THE INDIANS OF TO-DAY
THE PUNISHMENT OF THE STINGY
AMERICAN DUCK SHOOTING
AMERICAN GAME BIRD SHOOTING
TRAILS OF THE PATHFINDERS

"JACK'S GUN WAS AT HIS SHOULDER, HE FIRED."—*Page* 174

JACK
AMONG THE INDIANS

OR

A BOY'S SUMMER ON THE BUFFALO PLAINS

BY

GEORGE BIRD GRINNELL

Author of "Jack, the Young Ranchman," "Pawnee Hero Stories," "Blackfoot Lodge Tales," "The Story of the Indian," "The Indians of To-day," etc.

Illustrated by

EDWIN WILLARD DEMING

NEW YORK

FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

Copyright, 1900,
By Frederick A. Stokes Company

Fifteenth Printing

Printed in the United States of America

My Dear Nephews and Nieces :—

A long time ago, before any of you were born, great herds of buffalo fed on the western plains, and wild Indians lived by hunting them. They ate the flesh, wore the skins as clothing, slept in lodges made from the hides, and fashioned tools from different parts of the buffalo's body.

There were few settlements, and as the buffalo roamed far and wide over the treeless land, the Indians followed them; for then both were free. Often a tribe was obliged to defend itself against the attacks of enemies; and its young men often made war journeys into hostile country. Though the daily life of the village was quiet and simple, yet sometimes it was interrupted by most exciting incidents and adventures both of hunting and fighting.

You listened attentively to the story of "Jack, the Young Ranchman," and I hope that you will like to learn what Jack did the next season, when he spent the summer with the buffalo eaters of the Northern Plains, hunted their game, fought their enemies and lived their life.

Your affectionate

UNCLE.

NEW YORK, SEPT. 1, 1900.

ILLUSTRATIONS

"Jack's gun was at his shoulder, he fired" *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

"The mother kissing the child" 49

"The other buffalo, after looking about, started on" 102

"He had no time to think, hardly to move" . . . 281

Jack Among the Indians.

CHAPTER I.

BACK TO THE RANCH.

THE train rushed down the hill, with a long shrieking whistle, and then began to go more and more slowly. Thomas had brushed Jack off and thanked him for the coin that he put in his hand, and with the bag in one hand and the stool in the other now went out onto the platform and down the steps, Jack closely following. The train had almost stopped, and Jack bent forward over the porter's head to try to see the platform and to learn who was there to meet him. Suddenly he caught sight of three horses grazing not far from the station, and he shouted, "Oh, there's Pawnee! Look, Thomas! that's my riding-horse; that brown with the saddle on."

"That's yours, is it, Master Jack? He's a good one; I can see that from here. Are you going to ride out to the ranch?"

"I don't know," said Jack, "but we must be, I guess." And then, as he jumped down off the step and saw Hugh walking toward him, he shouted, "Hello, Hugh! I'm glad you've come for me. Isn't

this bully? Good-bye, Thomas." And, taking his bag, he started running to meet Hugh.

"Well," said the old man, as he gave him a cordial hand clasp, "I am sure glad to see you, son. You got here all right, and on time. Didn't have no accidents, I expect?"

"No," said Jack, "I'm all right. Isn't it great to be here again. I don't know when I've been so glad before. I've been thinking about this time ever since I left here last fall."

"Well," said Hugh, "we're all right glad to have you come back again. I don't expect you've got any baggage except this, and there ain't nothing to wait for; we might go over and put the bag on the packhorse, and start. I've been here ever since last night, and I've had enough of this town."

"We're going to ride then, are we? That's better fun than going in the wagon. I thought when I saw Pawnee that maybe that was the way you'd fixed it."

"Yes," said Hugh, "I expect you ain't done much riding since you left here, and we've got a long way to go, and I thought maybe it would be a good thing to begin breaking you in to the saddle right off. How does it suit you?"

"Splendid," said Jack. "We can make better time on horseback than we could in the wagon, and I'm mighty anxious to get to the ranch and see everybody again. How's the elk?"

"He's all right; fat, and just about half shed off; he looks kind o' ragged, but before long, when his old coat's gone, he'll be smooth as silk and pretty as a picture."

"That's good, and how are the ducks?"

"They're all right, too," said Hugh, "barring a couple that got killed only a few days ago. I don't rightly know what 'twas that killed 'em, but I reckon 'twas a bob-cat. I seen the tracks of one in the brush the last snow we had, and a few days afterward one of your ducks disappeared one day while they was out down to the brook, and two days afterward the old black tom-cat was gone, and two or three days afterward another duck. I never did see anything of the ducks, but I found the bones of the old tom-cat up in the brush a little while afterward, and there was a lot of fur in his claws, and it was bob-cat hair. Since that second duck got taken I haven't let them birds out except when I was there to watch 'em, and keep my eye on 'em all the time."

"I'm sorry those ducks got killed," said Jack, "I was in hopes they'd breed this year, and we'd have a lot of young ones."

"Well, maybe they will, but they've got to be watched, or else they've got to have some sort of a pen built for 'em, because you see, they can't fly, and it's mighty easy for anything to catch 'em."

By this time they were close to the horses, and Jack ran up to Pawnee and began to talk to him and pat him. The horse put his ears forward and arched his neck over Jack's shoulder, rubbing his head against him, as if he really knew who it was and was glad to see the boy back again. Meantime, Hugh was gathering up the ropes, and coiling them and putting them on the saddles. He bridled his own horse, and Jack did the same for Pawnee, both throwing down the

reins; then the cinches of the pack saddle were tightened, and the bag quickly lashed in place.

"You better put your gun in your scabbard, son, and put some cartridges in your pocket; might be such a thing as you'd see something you'd want to shoot." Jack did so, and then they mounted and started off at a good lope over the prairie. Jack's heart was swelling with delight as he felt the cool wind on his face, and smelt again the odour of the sage, and saw the familiar birds rising from the ground and flying ahead, and alighting again in the road before them.

"I saw quite a lot of antelope from the train as we came along this morning, Hugh," he said. "I suppose there are plenty of 'em out at the ranch."

"Oh, yes, there's plenty of antelope. That bunch that used to live over in the pasture have just come back, and will be there all summer, I expect."

"Have you killed much game this winter?" said Jack.

"Well, no," was the reply, "not what you'd call much. We've had fresh meat right along, elk and blacktail and antelope. Early in the winter, just before we had that big storm, I went over to Point-of-rocks and killed three sheep; that's about the only thing out of ordinary that's been done."

"Three sheep! I wish I could get a chance to kill one. I've never even seen a sheep, and I want to get a shot at one most awfully."

"Well," said Hugh, "likely while we're up north we'll get a chance to; there's plenty of sheep in the Missouri River bad lands, and in the bluffs of the Yel-

lowstone, and of course in the mountains. The Piegans, you know, don't go much into the mountains, but they kill quite some sheep in the bad lands, and on some of the buttes. Now, the Sweet Grass Hills are a great place for sheep; we're likely after we get to the Piegans to camp close to them, and maybe we can make a hunt up there for two or three days. I ain't a mite afeared but what you'll have chances at sheep before summer's over."

"Gracious! buffalo and sheep! That would be enough hunting for one summer, I should think. You're sure that when we go north we'll have plenty of buffalo hunting?"

"Lord, yes," said Hugh, "there'll be buffalo a plenty long after you and I are both dead."

By this time they had passed through the breaks and crossed the river, and come up over the hill, so that they could see the great lone mountain, where the road turned off to the right. "Oh, there's Bent Rock Mountain! that looks good, don't it, with the gray rocks and the black cedars scattered all over it. Now, there are sheep there, Hugh; don't you ever hunt there?"

"No," said Hugh; "there's a little bunch of sheep there, but they're mighty hard to get at, and I don't bother with 'em."

They rode on down the hill at a swinging canter, splashed through the stream, turned to the right and went up by the mountain, past the place where about a year before Jack had seen his first grizzly, and then turning to the left, galloped along across the undulating sage-brush prairie. The pack horse all the time

was following close at their heels; his load was light and he knew that he was going home, and required no driving.

Suddenly, as they rode over the crest of one of the prairie swells, which gave a little wider view than most of them, Jack saw quite close to them a cow running hard, with head down and tongue out, and right at her heels a big wolf, and a little behind that, another. Just as they came in sight, the leading wolf sprang forward and caught the cow by the flank, and though it seemed impossible that so small an animal should throw one so large, the cow fell prone upon the prairie. While all this was passing before Jack's eyes, Hugh's horse stopped, his rider swung out of the saddle, his gun came to his shoulder, and as the smoke leaped from it, the second wolf fell. Jack had not been long enough on the prairie to act quite as quickly as Hugh; it took him a second or two to drag his gun from its scabbard and to spring from his horse, but the wolf that had pulled down the cow had not run more than a few yards before he fired at it; it gave a dismal howl, but still kept on; he shot again, and again the wolf yelled, but still it ran. It was almost on top of the hill now, when Hugh fired, and it disappeared. They jumped into their saddles and rode to the place, and found the wolf just kicking in the death struggle.

"Well," said Hugh, "that's a good job, anyhow. There's been a heap o' wolves round this winter, and I'm glad we got these two. I wish we'd come a minute earlier, so's to have saved that cow."

"Do you think she's dead, Hugh?" said Jack.

"I expect so," said Hugh. "I've seen a heap o'

cattle killed by just one bite from a wolf; often it didn't seem if 'twas a bad bite either. I've sometimes thought that maybe they was just scared to death. I expect, though, we'll find that cow dead." By this time the wolf had ceased to struggle, and Hugh, picking it up, threw it across his saddle, and they walked back to the cow and the other wolf, which lay within three feet of each other. As Hugh had thought, the cow was dead, though the wound in her flank did not seem to be a severe one. Evidently she had been chased for some distance, for on her neck and shoulders there was froth from the mouth, showing that she had run a long way. Hugh turned her over and looked at the brand on her side. "Well," he said, "it's one of Powell's cows. The wolves do seem to pick out his cows, and do him a heap o' harm. Nice cow, too; in good order. I hate to see this beef go to waste. I believe I'll butcher her, so she won't spoil, and maybe your uncle will want to send down a wagon to-morrow and bring the meat into camp. While I'm doing that, do you expect you could skin one of them wolves? I reckon you'd like to save them hides; they're in pretty fair order, for they haven't begun to shed out much yet. While you're doing it you might look and see where your bullets hit the wolf you shot at. I expect I can tell you why he didn't fall right off when you shot. You're out of practice, and you drawed your sight too coarse. You hit him both times, but kind o' creased him instead of hitting him where the life lay. You ain't forgot how to shoot, but you've got to learn your gun over again."

While Hugh was opening the cow and removing the

entrails, Jack took out his pocket knife and began to skin the wolf. Luckily he had had his knife sharpened just before he left home, and so he worked pretty fast, and before Hugh had left the cow and begun to skin the other wolf, Jack was half through with his. They finished skinning at about the same time, and Hugh tied the two hides on the pack-horse; then he lit a pipe, sat down and smoked for a while.

"I don't grudge the time we took to kill these wolves," he said. "Killing wolves is part of the work on a ranch, just like taking calves out of a snow-bank, or branding colts is. It's something that's got to be did, and like all other work it takes time. Where did you find them bullet holes of yours, son?"

"I found them just where you said they'd be, Hugh. One of them had just cut the skin on the back, and the other went through just over the shoulders, and nicked one of the shoulder-blades."

"That's what I thought," said Hugh; "you've got to fire a few shots and learn over again just how to hold your gun, if you want to drive nails. Now, let's go along. I'd like to get to the ranch as near supper time as we can."

They mounted and rode on. The wind was now blowing so hard that, although they rode side by side, they could not talk to each other without shouting. The horses were fat and fresh, and mile after mile disappeared swiftly under their ringing hoofs. Every few minutes Jack saw some place that was familiar to him, and wanted to ask Hugh something about it, but a few attempts convinced him that it was useless to try to talk in the wind. Now and then a bunch of antelope

were seen off to one side, or a jack-rabbit jumped up from under a sage brush, and raced off, or a single sage-hen rose from the ground and scaled off down the wind. As they climbed more slowly the divide which led up to the valley where the ranch was situated they passed through a village of prairie dogs. These had not long since awakened from their winter sleep, and were busy plucking the young grass, now just appearing above the ground, and only those nearest the road paid any attention to the horsemen. Now and then little bunches of horses were passed, still clad in their winter coats, which hung down a hand's breadth below their chins and necks and bellies. With them they could see now and then tiny colts, which kept close to their mothers' sides, feeling that only there were they out of danger. At the edge of the dog town a badger was seen, nosing along through the sage brush, and Jack reached down his hand to get his gun, but looking at Hugh saw him shake his head, and understood that he did not wish to wait.

The sun had nearly reached the western mountains when they rode down into the Swiftwater Valley, and though they galloped along at a good pace, it was long after dark before the lights of the ranch house met their eyes. A little later they halted before the barn.

"Now, son, you're here again, and this time I expect you don't need no looking after. We'll unsaddle here; you hang your things up on the old peg, and we'll leave the horses in the stalls to-night."

A few moments later, carrying their guns and Jack's bag, they stepped into the kitchen of the ranch, and were warmly welcomed by all hands.

CHAPTER II.

A GLANCE BACKWARD.

It was late May at the Swiftwater Ranch; back in the east it would have been summer, but here the snow was falling heavily, and being whirled about the buildings by the high wind, piling up in drifts on the leeward side, and being swept off the ground to windward. Down in the bunk-house Jack Danvers and Hugh Johnson were sitting on the floor near the warm stove, looking over pack-saddles, cinches and ropes, for they were preparing to make a long journey.

Only the day before Jack had reached the ranch from New York, after an absence of seven months, and all his friends there were glad to see him again. During the winter he had succeeded in persuading his parents to consent to his making the long trip up north to the Piegan camp, of which Hugh and John Monroe had talked to him the year before. Mr. Sturgis, his uncle, wished to have him go, and had said that he was willing to let Hugh be absent from the ranch during the time needed for the journey and the stay in the Indian camp. This would be not less than four months, for it would take them a month to reach the camp, and nearly as much more to return, and it was not worth while to make so long a trip unless they were to stay with the Indians two or three months.

It will be remembered by those who have read the adventures of Jack during his summer spent on Mr. Sturgis' ranch, that he had learned a good deal about life in the west;—to ride and shoot and throw a rope —and had been taught by Hugh much of the knowledge required by one who lived the open-air life of mountain and prairie. Hugh had said, and Jack's uncle agreed with him, that they two could perfectly well make the journey to the north. There was only one possible cause of anxiety, and that was the chance that they might meet with some party of hostile Indians, in which case they might have to fight for their lives. There was not much danger that this would happen, for spring had but just opened, the grass was only now beginning to start; the Indian ponies, which are always thin in flesh at the end of the winter, would not have become fat; and so it was too early for war parties to be moving about much. On the other hand, the riding and pack animals taken by Hugh would be fat and in good condition, and so, well able to run away from any pursuers. It had been determined, too, to select horses that were fast, and when these precautions had been taken, and Hugh's great knowledge of Indians and their ways was considered, the danger of trouble appeared very slight.

Mr. Sturgis was extremely fond of Jack, and dearly loved his sister, and he would not for a moment have thought of letting the boy run any risks.

"I didn't hardly know you yesterday, son, when you got off the train; you seem to have changed a heap since you went away from here last fall. You're sure grown; you're a heap taller than you were, and

you look kind o' white and bleached out, like you'd faded."

"I guess that's so, Hugh," replied Jack, "I know I've grown pretty near two inches, for I was measured last fall, when I entered school, and again this spring when I left, and of course I'm white, because I've been living in a house ever since I got back, and haven't been out of doors at all."

"Well, what did ye do all winter?" said Hugh; "went to school, I reckon, and learned a whole lot. Study hard?"

"Yes, I studied hard. Of course I wanted to do well, but after I'd been back a little while, I thought that maybe if I worked right hard at school, and got good reports right along, father would be more willing to have me come out here again and spend the summer with you."

"Well, that was pretty good sense. I expect ye tried to keep him pleased with your schooling right along."

"Yes, I did," said Jack. "I told Uncle Will about it soon after I started in at school, and he said it was a mighty good idea, and I'd better keep it up. I don't know whether they would have let me come or not, if it hadn't been for Uncle Will. When he left home in the spring I heard him say to mother, 'Jack's been working hard all winter, and he's getting to look pretty thin and white; I really think you'd better send him off to me again in a month or two, for that long trip that he and Hugh have been planning.' So along in April I spoke to father about coming out again. He said he was willing I should come if mother was,

and that he'd talk to her about it; so after a while it got so that we all of us talked it over together, and at last father and mother both said that I could come; and here I am, and mighty glad to get back here, too, you bet."

"Well, you bet, we're mighty glad to see you, and we'd like to have you stop here right along; only I don't expect that would do, 'cause ye're young and ye've got a heap to learn; but it's sure mighty good for a boy to spend three or four months out here in the fine weather, and so to get ready for these long months when ye've got to live in a house all the time."

"There's one thing I did last winter, Hugh, that I think is going to be a lot of fun; I learned how to make a bird skin."

"Make a bird skin!" said Hugh. "How do ye make it?"

"I mean I learned how to skin a bird, and stuff cotton into it, and fix it up so that it looks just like a dead bird lying there with its legs stretched out. You know there are people who study birds and know all about all the different kinds. When they see a bird they can tell you in a minute just what its Latin name is, and where it lives in summer, and then where it goes to pass the winter, for of course there are lots of birds that go south in the fall, until the weather gets warm, and then come north again."

"Yes, that's so," said Hugh, "everybody knows that."

"Well," continued Jack, "of course there isn't any man who has been all over the world and seen all the birds that there are, alive; so the men that go to one

place, kill and skin a lot of the birds that live there, and then when they get back they put these skins in a museum, where everybody can see them; and there are a lot of men doing this all the time; and so after a while the biggest museums come to have the skins of pretty nearly all the birds there are. There must be a lot of 'em in all. An ornithologist told me there were more than 750 in North America."

"What was it told you that?" asked Hugh.

"An ornithologist," said Jack.

"What's that?" questioned Hugh; "it's a mighty long word, 'pears to me."

"It means a man that studies birds, and knows all about them."

"Well," said Hugh, "I'd hate to be called by such a name as that, even if I did know all about birds."

"Why," said Jack, "that word isn't anything to some of the Latin names these little birds have. I don't know what they are, many of them, at least, but they're all written down in Uncle Will's bird book, up at the house, and some of them are terrors, I can tell you."

"And this man told you there was 750 different kinds of birds in this country, did he?" said Hugh.

"That's what he told me," said Jack.

"Well," said Hugh, "of course this is a big country, and I make no doubt there's lots o' birds that I never saw, but I don't believe that there's fifty different kinds o' birds around this ranch."

"Oh, yes there are. I'll bet there's twice as many as that. Why just try and count 'em up for yourself; think of all the different kinds of ducks and geese that

we saw last fall, and the grouse, and the robins and the gray jays. I'll bet you could count more than fifty yourself, if you had time to think about it."

"Well," said Hugh, "maybe I could; come to think about it; there's a heap o' different kinds o' birds. I never paid much attention to any of 'em, only the kinds that's good to eat; but say, I should think it would be mighty hard work skinning these little birds; their skin must be awful thin, and tear mighty easy."

"Well," said Jack, "that's just what I thought when I started in, but the fact is their skins are pretty tough. Of course you can't pull at them the way you would at a deer skin, but if you know how to do it, you scarcely ever tear a bird skin.

"Uncle Will put me up to this soon after I got home, and he took me down to a bird skinner and hired him to give me lessons. I used to go down there twice a week all through the winter and spring, and I have got so now that I can make a pretty good skin, and work pretty fast, too. I'm going to try to collect a few skins here, sometime when I can. If I come out another summer to stay here, I shall try to make a collection of all the birds that live here in summer."

"Well, I'd like right well to see you doing that work. It seems to me it would be mighty hard, but then there's a whole lot of things that we ain't none of us ever done that looks hard and yet are real easy after we know how to do 'em."

While all this talk was going on, they had been sorting over the material that was strewed on the floor,

had picked out four good strong pack saddles, and the greater part of their riggings. Two of the lash cinches were in good order, the other two needed new hooks. Hugh stepped out of doors, and presently returned, bringing with him a small elk horn, from which he sawed off two lengths, each of which bore a prong. These he placed in a vice, shaped with a heavy rasp, and then passed over to Jack to fasten to the cinches. The smooth hook of horn was laced to the end of the cinch so that it hung down three inches below it.

All the straps of the pack saddle were now carefully looked over; any that were worn or in any way weak were renewed; sling ropes of just the right length were cut for each saddle, and new lash ropes took the place of one or two that showed signs of wear; four hackamores were made, one for each pack horse.

This work took up all the morning, and was not entirely finished when the horn blew for dinner.

CHAPTER III.

GETTING READY.

WHEN Hugh and Jack went back to the bunk-house, after dinner, the snow had ceased falling, and the sun was shining brightly. The little birds that had been hidden in the brush during the storm had come out, and were now hopping about on the wet ground, feeding, while some were cheerily singing from the tops of the fence posts. The mellow whistle of the meadow lark was heard alike from far down the valley and from the hillsides above them, and the black-birds were gurgling in the aspens behind the house. Jack stopped before entering the bunk-house and looked at the mountain, still white with snow, and stretched out his arms and drew a deep breath, and yelled aloud with pure delight. Hugh turned and looked back at him through the open door, smiling, as if greatly pleased, and said, "Seems good to get back, don't it? I tell ye there's no place like the mountains, and the longer ye stay among them the longer ye want to be there."

"I guess that's so, Hugh," said Jack; "it seems to me I never was so glad to be anywhere as I am to be here. Somehow I can't say what I feel, but I just seem to be all full in here," and he placed his hand on his breast.

"Yes, I know what you mean, although I can't say it no more than you can."

A few moments later the two were kneeling on the floor, unpacking the contents of a large box which had come to the ranch some time before. Hugh and Mr. Sturgis had thought that it might be a good thing for the travellers to take with them some articles to trade with the Indians. Of course a few presents would be needed, for, although Hugh, from his old acquaintance with the tribe, was sure of a hearty welcome, and Jack, as a friend of Hugh and John Monroe, would be gladly received, there would be times when it would be desirable to make to certain men small gifts; but besides this, it had occurred to Mr. Sturgis that perhaps they might buy a few horses, and furs enough to load them, and might bring them back on their return journey. Thus, the trip would be one of mingled business and pleasure, and there certainly was no possible objection to making a trading journey of the visit.

The different bundles that were taken out were labeled, and were put in piles on the floor. There were bolts of red and of blue cloth · and of gaily figured calicos; two or three bundles of bright handkerchiefs; boxes containing beads, selected with care as being the kind most prized by the Indians; there was quite a large bundle of cans of dry paint of different colors; and last, and perhaps most important of all, if one might estimate its value by the amount of pleasure it would give, a large bundle of tobacco.

"Quite a bunch of stuff, ain't it, son?"

"Yes, indeed," said Jack; "there's more than I

thought there was. How are you going to divide it up?"

"Well," said Hugh, "these things look like more than they are. A lot of these bundles are bulky, and don't weigh much. I guess we'll get it all on two horses, and that will leave one horse for the grub and one for our beds and the mess outfit. Now, I expect the best thing we can do is to go up and see if we can't get Mrs. Carter to give us three or four seamless sacks, and make up packs of all this stuff, so that we can throw 'em right on and off the horses. Then we won't have to be gathering up a lot of little, small bundles every time we start to pack in the morning. Of course gunny sacks would do, but we want to keep all this stuff as clean as we can, so that when we get to the Indian camp and open it, even the outsides of the bundles will look pretty fresh and new; and besides that we've got to get a couple of mantas for these packs, for likely we'll have plenty of rain storms while we're on the road, and we want to keep these things dry if we can. The best way we can work it, we'll likely get them wet crossing some creek between here and the north, for all the creeks will be full now for the next month, and we'll likely have to do some swimming." Hugh went back into the dark store room and rummaged about for awhile, and then came out, carrying three or four nearly square pieces of canvas, which he threw on the ground.

"I thought we had some," he said in a satisfied tone, "but they ain't been used for a long time, and I didn't know but the boys had lost 'em."

"What are they for, Hugh?"

"Why, you see," said Hugh, "you throw a manta over your pack, after you get the load on, but before you put on your lash rope; the lash holds the manta in place, and it keeps everything below it dry.

"Well now, son, we've got everything except the blankets, and I believe it would be a good idea if you'd saddle up Pawnee and go out and drive in the horses that are in the pasture, and I'll show you what pack horses we've picked out, and then we'll put the saddles on 'em, and make sure that we've got everything."

"All right, Hugh, I'll do it;" and he went down to the stable, put the saddle on Pawnee, rode over into the pasture and gathered what horses were there, drove them into the corral, and shut the gate. Hugh had already carried down two of the pack saddles and blankets, and Jack, leaving Pawnee at the corral, started up to the bunk-house, but met Hugh coming with the other two saddles and their blankets.

"Now," said Hugh, as they reached the corral, "I'll show you what horses I've picked out for the trip. We want animals that are fat and strong and pretty tough, and pretty fast, too. I ain't going to take along any old plug pack horses, because, you see, it might be such a thing as we'd get chased, and have to run, and we don't want to have horses that we'll have to leave behind, and so lose our grub or our blankets or our goods. Your uncle, he said he was willing we should take two pretty good saddle horses for two of our pack animals, and I figured we'd take two of them young horses that you see Toney bust last year; they ain't

well enough broke yet to be right good riding horses, but they're tough and strong, and by the time they've carried a pack a week or ten days they'll be plenty gentle.

"Take your rope now and go in and catch me that paint horse, and we'll put him in the small corral, and then I want that big dun over there, him they call the bucking dun, and then that black with the white hind foot; and then I reckoned we'd take either that star-faced bay or else that gray, I ain't quite made up my mind which. Which do you like the best?"

"Well, Hugh, if we were just going off on a trip I'd take the gray, because he looks the stoutest, and the best able to carry a load, but I should think the bay could run the fastest, if you're looking for speed."

"Well now, you ain't forgot all you learned last year, have you? That's a pretty good judgment. I expect we'll leave the gray here and take the bay, and we'll make him carry our beds and ammunition, because that's the lightest load, and them's the things we'd hate most to lose."

Jack caught the horses one by one, and was pleased to find that he had not forgotten how to throw a rope. He turned them into the small corral, and Hugh let the other horses out into the pasture; then, one by one, the horses were caught, the hackamores put on them, and then blankets and saddles. At first the cinches were drawn only tight enough to keep the saddles in place, but after all were saddled, they went over them again and drew both cinches up tight. To this operation the bucking dun objected strenuously, and, as the flank cinch was drawn tight, he broke

away, and bucked vigourously about the small corral. When he had stopped they caught him again, and again drew up on the cinch, finally tying it; and then, fastening up the hackamore, turned the horse loose. The star-faced bay also bucked, but not so hard nor so long as the dun.

"Now, I'll tell you what, son," said Hugh, "any of these horses we take along can be ridden, and they ain't none of 'em got loads so heavy but what three of 'em can carry all the stuff there is; so that if anything should happen to either of our riding horses we can still have a horse apiece to ride. Maybe it might be a pretty good thing to take along an extra saddle horse or two. I don't know as it would, and I don't know *as* it would. Of course for awhile we've got to picket all these horses, and when you've got to do that, every extra horse makes a lot of trouble, and makes another rope to lose. We'll have to think about that and I reckon I'll ask Jo if he knows of any one of these horses that's good to stay about camp, easy caught, and yet is pretty fast. You see, pretty nearly all these is new horses, and I don't know much about them."

By this time the afternoon was well advanced; the sun was still shining warmly, and the snow which had fallen in the morning was melting fast. Hugh and Jack went over to the sunny side of the bunk-house and sat down there on a log, and Hugh filled his pipe and smoked.

"There's one thing," he said, "we ought to have, but we ain't got it, and we ain't likely to get it; we ought to have some dried meat to take along. You

see, we won't have no time to hunt, travelling steady, the way we will, and for a while we'll have to live on bacon. Of course there'll be a chance to kill an antelope now and then, but until we strike buffalo we can't expect much fresh meat. I'd like it right well if we had a little bunch of dried meat, but we ain't got it. If your uncle had thought best to send back and get some of that beef I butchered yesterday, we could have dried some of that, but he didn't want to eat another man's beef, and I don't know as I blame him much. If he did that this spring, somebody might kill a beef that belonged to him in the fall, just because he was hungry. Might be such a thing as we'd get a piece of beef over to Powell's; we'll about make his ranch to-morrow night, and then that'll be the last place we'll strike till we get way up north."

"Oh, do we go by Powell's?" said Jack; "I'd like to see all of them again, Charlie, Bess and Mr. and Mrs. Powell; they were nice to us last summer."

"Yes," said Hugh, "they're good people. Good neighbours. You know, don't you," he went on, "Powell bought thirty saddle horses from your uncle last fall, after you left; he paid fifty dollars a head for 'em, and sold 'em for sixty-five. He's quite a trader, Powell is."

As they sat there talking, the sound of a cow bell was heard at first faintly, and a long way off, but it kept getting nearer and nearer. Jack asked Hugh, "Who gets the milk cows now, Hugh?"

"Jo does. He often says he wishes he had you to send out to bring 'em in; but that ain't one of the milk cows coming now."

"Well, what is it? I thought it was old Browny's bell."

"No, that's the bell old Browny used to wear, but your elk wears it now, and that's him a-coming."

Sure enough; a moment afterward an elk stepped out of the brush above them on the hillside, and came toward the house; it wore a bell, and besides this, a great strip of red cloth was tied around its neck.

"What in the world is that he's got around his neck, Hugh?" said Jack; "it looks as if he had a sore throat and had a strip of red flannel tied around it."

"Well," said Hugh, "he's got the red flannel all right. This spring when we turned him out Jo was afraid that somebody would shoot him for a wild elk, so he put the bell on, and that red cloth, and then he told everybody he met, when he was riding about it, and I expect there ain't no one in quite a scope of country but knows about that elk, and just how he sounds and looks."

Meantime the elk had been slowly approaching, and Jack got up and walked over toward it. It was just shedding out, and great patches of its body were smooth and yellow, while other patches were still covered with long, brownish hair, at the base of which a thick fur or wool could be seen. Hugh called out to Jack, "You want to look out for him, son; he's pretty handy sometimes with them fore feet of his, when he ain't in a good temper; he may strike at you." When Jack heard this he did not go very close to the elk, but contented himself with walking about it, while the animal followed him with its great mild eyes. A moment after, Hugh came up with some salt in his hand

and held it out to the elk, which walked quietly up and licked the salt off his hand.

"I ain't got much use for a tame elk," said Hugh; "they're stupid critters, and 'most always mean; you never can trust 'em."

"I think just as you do, Hugh; that they're awful stupid; and I would never again take the trouble to pack a calf into camp.

Presently the elk put down its head and began to feed away from them, and they went back to their seat in the sun. A little later they went down to the corral, unsaddled the pack horses, turned them out into the pasture, and carried the riggings up to the bunk-house. It proved that Mrs. Carter had four seamless sacks that she could let them have, and with these they made up four side packs of the goods. The two centre packs they made up with gunny sacks and canvas, so that when they started they would only have to lift the packs onto the horses.

The remainder of the day was devoted to laying out their provisions and their mess-kit. Their cooking utensils were put in a wooden box to go on the load above their beds. Everything was made ready as far as possible, so that in the morning there would be nothing to do except to catch and saddle the horses, put the loads on them, and start.

The day had passed swiftly for Jack, and when night came he was pretty tired. After supper his uncle talked to him for a little while, impressing on him the necessity of caution, telling him of the responsibility that would rest on Hugh, who had charge of him for this long trip, and explaining to him

that now he was starting off to act a man's part, and that he must exercise a man's discretion. He said, "Hugh feels very confident that you are old enough, and have had experience enough, to be trusted. He thinks that you will not be a cause of care or anxiety to him, but that you will understand that you must now use common sense and good judgment. I think that his estimate of you is a fairly just one, but I want you to try to be thoughtful and never let your boyish enthusiasm get the better of you. We all want you to have a good time on this trip, but we do not want you to have a good time at the cost of suffering of any sort to any older person."

"Well, Uncle Will," said Jack, "I have thought a good deal about that, too, and I know that there may be times when I'll have to use all the sense I have got, but I have made up my mind to follow Hugh's directions as closely as I can, and to try not to make a fool of myself."

"That's good," said his uncle; "if you can only keep that in mind all the time I shall not be anxious about you."

CHAPTER IV.

THE START.

ALTHOUGH Hugh called Jack very early next morning, it already was daylight and the sun was just rising. Jack saddled Pawnee, rode out into the pasture and drove in the horses, and before breakfast they had cut out their pack animals and saddled them, and left them standing in the corral. The night before, Hugh had laid out their provisions, which were of the simplest kind; a sack of flour, some corn meal, oat meal bacon, coffee, sugar and salt, were all they took. Their mess-kit consisted of two frying pans, a coffee pot, a small water bucket, a tin pan, a bake oven, tin plates and cups, and knives, spoons and forks. They took along, also, a dozen good butcher knives, a new axe and a small hatchet. Besides this, there was a coil of rope, from which lariats and lash ropes could be cut, in case of need.

Immediately after breakfast, Jack helped Hugh make up the loads, although really there was not much that he could do, except to look on and learn. They were to put the bedding and the mess outfit on one horse, the provisions on another, and the trade goods were to be carried by the two others.

Hugh said, "I wanted to get an early start this morning, if we could, because I expect likely the first

day out we'll have some trouble with the horses. You see, they're fat and fresh, haven't been doing nothing all winter, and they won't want to travel away from home; so it's likely we won't go very far, and we'll have a long day. Now, you run down to the corral, son, and bring up the dun; we'll load him with some of this trade stuff and see how he does. Maybe you'd better let Jo pack on the off side this morning, 'cause we want to make these loads stay, if we can. You'll have plenty of chances to pack before we get back again, and I expect by the time we ride in here in the fall you'll be a regular old government packer."

Jack went down to the corral and got the horse. He could not help feeling a little disappointed that he was not to help put on the loads. He felt as if, from this morning until the time of their return, he would like to take an equal share in all the work that was to be done; still, he could see that what Hugh said was wise, and that it was important to have the packs well put on this morning, when the horses were all fresh; so he led the dun up to the bunk-house, and stood back and watched the packing, trying to follow each operation. While he did this, he realised that his memory of the few lessons in packing that he had had the fall before was not very fresh, and this quite reconciled him to seeing Jo handle the ropes.

The dun laid back his ears, and rolled his eyes, and humped up his back a little, as the saddle cinches were tightened, but stood quiet while the packs were put in place, and the manta thrown over them. He jumped a little as the lash rope touched his hips, when Hugh was preparing to throw it, but when the

first pull was made by Jo, in tightening the lash cinch he bowed his back, put down his head, and made as if he would buck. Rube had him by the hackamore, however, and the men on either side clung to the ropes, and at last he was quieted until all the pulls had been made and the lash rope was fastened. But soon as Rube let go the hackamore, and he had taken a step or two and felt the swaying load on his back, he put down his head and began to buck in good earnest. Round and round he went, taking high jumps, and throwing his heels so far into the air that it seemed as if he must turn a somersault every time he struck the ground. Sometimes the load almost overbalanced, and he staggered, but the ropes held tight, and at last, tired of the hard work, he stood still. One of the men walked up to him and led him back to the bunk-house door, when the ropes were again tightened a little, and he was once more set free.

By this time Jack had gone down and brought up the black horse, on which a load was put, but he stood quiet. The provisions were put on the paint horse, which also was quiet; but the rattling of the dishes in their wooden box set the bay horse to bucking, though he did not keep it up long.

"There," said Hugh, when the bay had been caught again, and his load inspected, "I expect that's about as good as we can make it. Now then, son, it's time for you and me to saddle up, and then we can roll."

Jack brought Pawnee up to the house, and Hugh soon rode up on old Baldy. Mr. Sturgis, Mrs. Carter, and Rube and Jo all stood there to watch the travellers

start. Hugh tied a lariat to the hackamore of the bay horse, and, after shaking hands with every one, started off down the valley; while Jack, somewhat moved at the parting, shook hands very earnestly with all, and then, riding out on the hillside, drove the three pack horses after Hugh. Once or twice he turned about in his saddle and took off his hat and waved it to the little group standing together by the bunk-house, who waved their hands or their handkerchiefs in response.

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Carter, as the figures grew smaller and smaller, as they rode down the valley, "it does seem a shame to let a baby like that go off into the Indian country. I'll bet his ma don't know what risks he's taking."

"Pshaw," said Jo, "I tell you that boy's as good as a man; I'd rather have him for a partner than a heap o' men I know; and the old man's as good as two men, any day in the week. You bet they'll have an awful good time, and won't see no trouble. I just wish't I was goin' with 'em."

"No," said Mr. Sturgis, "I don't think they'll have any trouble; Jack's a level-headed fellow, with a good deal more discretion than most boys of his age. There's a bare chance of course that they may meet some hostile Indians, but they're well mounted, and I don't think they'll have trouble."

For the first two or three miles after their start the horses went on very well, but about the middle of the morning, those that Jack was driving began to give him a little trouble. They were now getting into a country away from their usual range, and began to try

to turn about and go home, and for the next half hour Jack was pretty busily employed turning back one after another that fell out of line and tried to retrace its steps. At length Hugh halted and dismounted, and motioning Jack to drive the pack horses by him, they sat down, and while Hugh smoked, had a little talk.

"Are they bothering you much?" asked Hugh.

"Yes," said Jack, "they keep trying to go back all the time; and that Dun is the worst of the bunch; he just won't go on."

"Well, we'll have to try to shove him along as far as Powell's place, and when they get a little tired, toward afternoon, likely they'll go better. I wouldn't be surprised though if it wouldn't be a good idea for us to borrow a horse from Powell, for you to ride during the day. I don't want you to run Pawnee down, chasing horses; I want to bring him into the Piegan camp fat, because I expect you'll do all your buffalo running on him. He's fat and strong now, and you don't weigh much, but still its pretty hard work running here and there, trying to keep a bunch of horses together, even if there's only three or four of 'em."

"Yes," said Jack, "I want to keep Pawnee in good shape, but I think that after the horses get used to their loads, and get used to travelling together, they'll go better, won't they?"

"I expect they will, and we needn't make up our minds about getting any horse until we get to Powell's. Maybe to-morrow we'll get Charlie to ride out with us for two or three hours, and help drive them horses. I expect if we can get 'em started right to-morrow, they'll go along pretty good."

After fifteen or twenty minutes they mounted and started on again. The horses had been feeding busily all this time, and now when they were driven along after the lead horse, they went more quietly, and made less trouble. Still, the day seemed a long one to Jack. They passed plenty of antelope on the prairie, but he had no time to think of them; he felt obliged to watch the horses constantly, and to keep them as close behind Hugh as he could. The prairie was full of pleasant sights and sounds, but there was no chance for him to enjoy them.

He felt very glad when, late in the afternoon, the low buildings of the Powell place came in sight. Half an hour later they were near enough to see the men working about the house, and then to see two figures in skirts come to the door and look out at them, and then at last to hear the delighted whoop of Charlie and the cheery greeting of Mr. Powell, as they came forward to shake hands with them. The horses were quickly unpacked and put in the pasture, the loads put under cover, and then all the family gathered around Jack and Hugh to hear the news from the neighbouring ranch.

"So you're really going to make that trip you talked about, are you, Jack?" said Charlie. "I tell you I'd give all my old boots if I were going along."

"So would I mine, Charlie," Jack replied. "I'll bet we could have a good time together. It's a great chance. You see, we're going up into the buffalo country, and we're going to be with the Indians, and see what they do and how they live. There ain't many fellows have a chance like this, and I wish you could be one of 'em."

"Well," said Charlie, "I know I can't; I've got to stay here and chase around over this prairie, riding for stock and killing wolves, when I might be going up there with you. It seems pretty hard, but I don't know as I ought to complain. I know father needs me, and now we're just getting a good start in stock, and if I were to go away he'd have to hire somebody to take my place, and he couldn't afford to do that. You see, father ain't like your uncle; I expect your uncle's a pretty rich man, but father ain't got anything except what you see here, and what stock we've got out on the range; then, besides that," he added, "I don't believe mother would be willing to have me go; she thinks it's awful dangerous for you and Hugh to go up there alone. We talked about that often last winter, and she said she didn't believe your mother'd ever let you go."

"Well," said Jack, "I don't believe there's much danger, because if there was, Uncle Will wouldn't have been willing to have me go, and I know he wanted me to. He said from the start that it would be a mighty good thing for me; and then, besides that, Hugh knows so much about Indians; they say that he's smarter even than an Indian about reading the signs of the prairie, and telling who is about, and what's likely to happen. Uncle Will said that he never would think of letting me go with any one except Hugh, for he thinks Hugh can carry a person through all right anywhere."

"I guess that's so; everybody that I ever heard talk about him in this country says that he's the smartest mountain man that there is. Why, last fall,

after you went away, old Jim Baker and his brother John passed through here, and they asked especially after Hugh, and when they learned that he was working over at your uncle's, they turned off and went over there, two days' travel out of their road, to see him. Jim Baker didn't say anything, he never talks at all, but John said that Hugh was one of the old kind; that there were only a few of them left now in the mountains, and he wanted to see Hugh, and so did his brother."

"Well," said Jack, "we're going to make the trip, and I believe we're going to get through all right, and not have a bit of trouble, and I wish you were going with us."

"So do I wish it, but I know I ain't, so it's no use crying over it."

Lying about the Powell house Jack saw two of the wolf puppies that he had helped dig out the summer before. They seemed tame enough, a good deal like big dogs, but they did not make friends with strangers, as dogs would have done, but instead, moved off out of the way. With Charlie and Bess, however, they seemed on very good terms, and very grateful for any petting or attention. The sight of these great beasts made Jack think a little sadly of his own wolf, Swiftfoot, far away in New York.

Bess, too, talked with Jack about the trip that he was making, and seemed to feel a little uneasy about its possible dangers, while Mrs. Powell said she thought it a shame that Jack should be allowed to go away off among the Indians, where she was sure he was going to be killed.

Hugh laughed at her doleful prophecies, and said, "Why, Mrs. Powell, there ain't a mite o' danger. I wasn't much older than Jack when I first came out into this country, and I've been travelling about now for more than forty years, and nothing's ever happened to me. It seems strange that a sensible woman like you should have such queer ideas."

The journey formed the principal topic of conversation that evening, but Hugh and Jack remembered to tell Mr. Powell about the cow that had been killed as they were riding out two days before, and about the swift punishment that had fallen on the two wolves. When bedtime came, Hugh and Jack spread their blankets on the kitchen floor, and were soon sleeping soundly.

Next morning Hugh asked Mr. Powell if he could spare them a saddle horse, and if he would let Charlie ride a few miles with them, until they learned how the animals could travel on this second day. If they went well, the horse could be sent back by Charlie, but if it was necessary to keep it, Jack would send back a note, asking his uncle to furnish Mr. Powell with a horse to take its place through the summer.

This morning the horses took their loads better. The Dun bucked a little, but not nearly so much as the day before, while the other horses, as soon as their loads were put on and they were turned loose, began to feed quite contentedly. Jack and Charlie packed on the off side, both pulling at the ropes, but Jack arranging them, under Charlie's direction. When they started, the animals fell into line very promptly, and walked briskly along close behind the lead horse.

They gave no trouble whatever, and seemed to have made up their minds that they were going somewhere, and must follow Hugh. So about the middle of the morning Hugh told Charlie that it was not necessary for him to come any further, and that they would not need to take along the extra horse. So they shook hands there, and Charlie rode off back to the ranch at a gallop, while the pack train started on its journey north. Jack felt now as if they were really cut off, for he knew that they would probably not see a white face again until they reached the far-away Missouri River.

CHAPTER V.

THE FIRST FRESH MEAT.

ALL day long the two travelled steadily forward, stopping only once or twice to look at the packs, and to smoke. The pack horses followed their leader pretty well, and gave Jack little trouble, so that he was free to look about him and enjoy the bright sun, the cool breeze, and the birds and animals that from time to time showed themselves near them. There was no trail, but Hugh seemed to be travelling north without any land marks to guide him. During one of their halts Jack asked Hugh where they would camp that night.

"Well, we can camp most anywhere, for we'll find plenty of water toward the end of the afternoon. We'll either come on La Bonté, or on some little creek running into it. There's good feed anywhere, and wood enough for us, too. I reckon we'll have to picket all the horses to-night, and maybe every night for the next week, but after that it will be enough if we picket three of 'em, and let the other three drag their ropes. After they once get used to being together they ain't none of 'em likely to wander off, without the whole bunch goes."

"It would be pretty bad if we were to lose our horses, wouldn't it, Hugh?"

"It sure would," was the reply; "there's mighty few things that's worse than being left afoot on the prairie. I often wonder how it was in the old times, when one of the Companies would send a man off to go on foot two or three hundred miles, with no grub, and one blanket and a copper kettle, and maybe twelve balls."

"How do you mean, Hugh; twelve balls?"

"Why, don't you know," said Hugh, "in them days, when a man worked for one of the Fur Companies they only gave him just so much powder and lead. Of course, ammunition came high then, and they might send a man off to make a long journey on foot and not give him any grub, and just six or eight or ten charges for his gun, expecting him to kill whatever he ate. Travelling in this country in them days couldn't have been much fun."

"I should think not. But suppose such a man met Indians, and had to fight; what would he do then?"

"Well," said Hugh, "them men didn't calculate to fight; they calculated to keep out of sight; and then the Indians weren't right mean then. If they found a fellow travelling on the prairie they'd charge up to him and scare him about half to death, but likely they wouldn't hurt him. Maybe they'd just talk to him and let him go, or at worst they'd take his gun and his clothes, everything that he had, and turn him loose."

"But then I should think he'd starve to death."

"Well, I expect maybe a good many men did starve to death that nobody ever heard of. It's a sure thing that lots of men started out to go from one place to another, and never got to the other place."

"Did you ever have to do that, Hugh?" said Jack.

"No," said Hugh, "I never did. Fact is, I never worked regular for no fur company, I was always a free trapper, as they called it, until beaver went out, and trapping was over; then I hired out to the Government, and took parties of troops around over the country, fellows that were making maps; and some seasons I guided emigrant trains, and hunted for posts. One or two years I traded with Indians, working for Bent and St. Vrain. I liked that about as well as any work I ever did. Then presently the railroad came along, and I got work with them; and by-and-by I settled down to kind o' learn the cow-punching trade, and here I am to-day."

"My, Hugh! you must have seen an awful lot in all this time. How many years is it since you first came out?"

"It'll be forty-three years next August since I started from old Kentucky. I was sixteen years old then, and that same fall I got out to St. Joe, and I have been travelling the prairie ever since."

"Forty-three years ago!" said Jack, thoughtfully; "then you must be fifty-nine."

"Yes, I am fifty-nine years old, and I expect I look it, don't I?"

"Yes, you do look pretty old, but I think that's because your hair and beard are white; your face doesn't look old."

"Well, I'm old enough to have learned a heap, and I expect if I was fifteen years old to-day, and knowed as much as I know now, and was back in old Kentucky, I'd stop right there."

The sun was drawing toward the western horizon when, on riding over the crest of the hill, Jack saw a mile or two before him a long winding line of dark green, which he knew to be the timber that marked the course of a stream. Many antelope were feeding on the slope down which they passed, and these seemed to be quite fearless, and moved out of the way slowly as the train drew near them. The stream was a small one, but flowed through a wide, level bottom, and Hugh, directing his course toward a group of cottonwood trees, drew up under them, dismounted, and throwing down his bridle rein, said, "Let's camp."

In a very short time the loads were taken from the animals, and piled on the ground at the foot of one of the trees; the saddles were placed on the packs, and the blankets upsidedown on the saddles, so that any moisture on them might dry, and the mantas were thrown on the ground nearby, and would be used at night to cover the riggings and the goods, so as to protect them from wet in case of rain. A lariat was tied to the neck of each horse, and they were allowed to wander at will over the bottom, except old Baldy, whose rope was tied to a bush.

"It's a pretty good thing," Hugh explained, "to have one horse anchored where you know you can get at him. Might be such a thing that something would scare these horses and they'd all take off over the bluffs, but if we've got one riding horse where we can put our hands on him, we can get 'em back easy enough, while if we had to chase 'em afoot it might be a long, slow business. Now, son," he went on, "you take this kettle and get a bucket o' water, and I'll start a fire, and we'll have some supper."

Jack picked up the bucket and started down to the stream, but before he had taken a half dozen steps Hugh called him back.

"I guess you've forgot something, ain't you?" he said; and then when Jack looked puzzled, he went on to say, "Now, son, I've got to say over again to you something that I said last summer; that's a long time ago, and I don't much wonder you forgot it. We're going into a strange country now, and we may meet strange people, maybe enemies, so you'd better just get into the way of packing your gun around with you wherever you go, it ain't a very heavy load to carry, and you may want it bad some time."

Jack had not taken off his cartridge belt, and he stepped over and picked up his rifle, and then went and got the water. By the time he had returned, Hugh had kindled a fire and had brought quite a pile of wood, and Jack helped him to gather more; so that before long they had more than they could use during the night. It did not take long to cook their simple supper, which consisted only of bacon, bread and coffee. While they were doing it, Hugh remarked, "I don't believe it's going to rain to-night, and I don't think it's worth while to put up a tent, unless you want it."

"No indeed," said Jack, "I'd rather sleep in the open air, unless we're likely to have a storm."

"Well, let it go at that.

"Now, there's one thing we've got to do, and that is to keep a lot of picket pins on hand until these horses get wonted. I put a half dozen hard wood pins in the gunny sack in the mess box, but we'll be losing

them right along, and I believe I'll go to work on an old lodge pole that's lying over here in the brush and make some pins for to-night. You might go out and get around them horses and start them back this way; they're working too far up the creek. Don't chase 'em or scare 'em; just go around 'em and drive 'em slowly until you get their heads turned this way. If you should see a buck antelope on the way, you might kill him, if you can, and we'll put him on one of the packs and take him along."

"I'd like to do that, Hugh, but there ain't much likelihood of seeing an antelope down in the bottom, is there?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Hugh; "you might see one; or you might jump a deer out of some of this brush. Don't kill a doe, though; she won't be no account to eat; and don't go too far, and mind you keep your eye out for signs. If you see any people, or sign of where people's been lately, get back to camp as quick as you can."

The horses had been feeding away from camp, and some of them were already hidden among the underbrush that grew in the valley. Jack walked over to the foot of the bluffs, and up the stream half a mile, and then, having got beyond the horses, he walked quietly toward them, turned them down the stream toward camp, followed them to the edge of the brush, and saw that they were now busily feeding in the right direction; then he turned about and walked up the stream.

He had not gone far when he saw in the sand at the edge of the creek the tracks of two deer, one set

quite large, and the other rather small. He looked carefully about him in all directions but could see nothing, though the tracks seemed quite fresh. Keeping on up the stream, walking very quietly, stopping often to look all about him, he came to the edge of a little meadow, almost surrounded by bushes, and there, as he paused before stepping out of the brush, he saw near the other side, two deer.

Luckily for him, the gentle breeze was blowing down the stream, and so the deer did not smell him. When he first saw them their heads were down, and what first caught his eye was the rapid side-wise motion of the white tail of one of the animals. Almost as he stopped, the deer raised their heads, looked about for a moment, and then began to feed again. He could see that both of them had small horns, and yet one seemed quite a large deer. They were not far off, only about sixty yards, and Jack quietly dropped on his knee, slipped a cartridge into his gun, and made ready to fire. He hesitated a little, for both deer stood with their hips almost toward him, and he hoped that in a moment or two they might change their positions, so as to give him a broadside shot. Presently that very thing happened; the larger deer turned a little to the left, and then still more, so that its shoulder and side presented a fair mark. The next time that it raised its head and stood quite still, Jack drew a very fine bead on it, behind the shoulder and low down, and fired.

The deer leaped high into the air, and with two or three graceful bounds, disappeared into the underbrush, followed by its companion. "I wonder if I

missed it," thought Jack; "it don't seem possible that I could have done that, for it was standing still, and I don't think I felt a particle nervous. I believe I'll go over there and try to follow their tracks a little way, anyhow."

When he had reached the place where the deer had been standing, their hoof-prints were plain in the soil, and following the direction they had gone, he saw other deep tracks, where they had made long leaps. He was so interested in following these tracks, that he almost forgot the question of whether he had missed or not, but suddenly, to his surprise, as he was puzzling out the tracks, he saw that the leaves of the brush, through which he was passing, were smeared with blood. "By jimminy!" thought Jack, "I did hit him! And now I wonder if I can find him." Looking carefully both for blood and tracks, he soon saw that the deer was bleeding freely, and that he need no longer look for tracks, since the blood on the underbrush and the grass and weeds was a constant guide to him. He had gone only forty or fifty yards, though to him it seemed much longer, when suddenly he stepped out of the brush at the foot of the bluffs, and saw, lying a few yards before him, the deer, dead on the grass. The other deer was standing nearby, looking back, as if puzzled, and Jack was strongly tempted to take a shot at it, but he reflected that one deer was more than they could use, and that it would be wasteful as well as cruel to kill a second.

As Jack stepped out into the open, the other deer stood for a moment looking at him, and then

trotted off up the slope, stopping once or twice within easy shot, and looking back, but at last disappeared over the hilltop. The deer on the ground was quite dead, and the position of the bullet hole showed that it must have been shot through the heart.

Jack drew his butcher knife from its sheath, bled the deer, and began to butcher it. He had often seen this done by other people, but this was the first attempt at it that he had ever made, and he found it not so easy as it looked. He worked slowly and awkwardly, and once was tempted to give the job up, and go back and get Hugh to do it. Still, he persevered, and although now the sun had set, he was still cutting and pulling, absorbed in his task, when a voice at his elbow said, "Well, you've got some meat, I see;" and looking up, he saw Hugh standing by him.

"I heard you shoot," said Hugh, "and when you didn't come back, I allowed you might have trouble getting your meat into camp, and so I came along. Now, it's getting late and you'd better let me finish that job."

"I wish you would, Hugh; it's the first animal I ever butchered, and though I've seen you do it a good many times, I find I don't know how."

"Well, it does look a little bit as if the rats had been gnawing at it." He took out his own knife and made a few quick cuts, which finished the work; then, cutting off the deer's head he laid his rifle on the ground, lifted the carcass on his back, and then, telling Jack to hand him the rifle, which he rested across the deer's legs before him, he strode off toward camp.

When they reached camp, Jack saw that the six horses were picketed close at hand; that the beds were unrolled and spread out on the ground, beneath one of the larger trees, and that the fire was burning cheerily.

"Now," said Hugh, as he threw the deer's carcass on the ground, "let's get the jacket off this fellow, and hang him up in the tree to cool."

The operation of skinning the deer and hanging it up did not take long, but before this was ended, night had fallen. Hugh lighted his pipe, and then sat by the fire for a little while, staring at it, and Jack lay at full length beside him, and as they sat there, told Hugh about how he had found and killed the deer.

"Well, son," said the old man, "I'm mighty glad we got that meat; it'll make things a heap more comfortable for us for the next few days. Now, we want to go to bed pretty quick, and get all the sleep we can. You know the nights are pretty short this time o' year, and we want to be up by daylight to-morrow morning and change them horses to fresh grass, and let 'em feed while we're getting breakfast; and then as soon as we're through, pack up and get started again. We've got a long way to go, and the quicker we get to the Piegan camp the better I'll be suited. We're likely to have plenty of delays on the road, and I want to make the best time I can."

"THE MOTHER KISSING THE CHILD."—*Page* 49

CHAPTER VI.

INDIANS OF OLD TIMES.

THE next morning they were up bright and early. The horses were all standing where they had been picketed the night before, and after the fire was kindled, Jack and Hugh went to them, took up the picket pins, and moved each horse so that he might have fresh grass to eat; then while Hugh prepared breakfast, Jack rolled up the beds and prepared all the camp furniture except the mess kit for packing. When they loaded the horses the carcass of the deer was put on one of the packs, and presently they started off down the creek. That night they camped at the Platte River, and the next morning crossed it, and kept on north.

For many days they travelled northward, crossing some small streams, and then coming to the head of Powder River, and journeying along the divide on its east side. The marches that they made were not very long. The grass was good, there was plenty of water, and the loads were light; so that their horses kept in good condition and moved along briskly. After two or three nights Hugh picketed only four of the horses, permitting two to drag their ropes, and when morning came these two were found with the others. A little later he freed one more, and at last

another one, so that finally there were only two horses confined at night. These were not always the same two, but usually the two riding horses were the ones on picket.

They made some slight changes in the packs, making two of them lighter and two heavier; and then, sometimes Jack, instead of riding Pawnee, let him carry a light pack, and rode the bay, while Hugh sometimes changed off to the dun or to the paint horse. One day when their stock of fresh meat was running low, since the deer had been almost eaten up, Hugh killed a buck antelope, which was in fair order; but they did no hunting, and travelled steadily.

One afternoon they camped on a small fork of Powder River, and after camp had been made and the horses picketed, Hugh proposed that they should take a little walk to the top of a high hill not far off, and see what could be seen. They started, going rather slowly, and stopping every now and then to look over the country with the field glass that Hugh carried. Nothing was seen except the wild animals of the prairie, and when they reached the top of the hill they sat down and took a long, long look. Hugh was carefully examining some distant object to the north when he felt himself pushed by Jack, and glancing around, saw that he was lying flat on the ground. Hugh very slowly lowered his head, and turning, looked in the direction in which Jack pointed. Coming up out of the ravine not far away, he saw a good sized grizzly bear, and following her, two little cubs. The cubs were still very small, and were cunning little creatures. They ran about fast yet clumsily, sometimes attacked

each other and had a pretended fight, stood up on their hind legs and sparred at each other with their front paws, and then one chased the other as he ran wildly off over the hillside. Every now and then the mother would stop to look at them, and she seemed to take pleasure in their high spirits. Now and then she stood up on her hind legs and looked in all directions, and she was now so close to the top of the hill that they could see her wrinkle her nose as she sniffed the air. Jack whispered to Hugh, "Ain't they beauties! Wouldn't I like to have them back at the ranch. There's no way we could catch 'em and take 'em along, is there?"

"No," whispered Hugh; "the only thing you can do is to kill 'em."

"By Jove, I don't want to do that; they're too cunning."

The little family was now quite near the top of the hill, but was passing around it. Again the mother stood on her hind legs to look, and while she was doing this one of the cubs rushed up in front of her and sprang into the air, grasping her around the chest and the mother closed her arms about it and put her head down. The whole act seemed like the springing of a child into its mother's arms, and the mother kissing the child.

"By mighty!" said Hugh, "I can't shoot at that bear, and I don't believe you can either, son."

"Not much, we'll let them go."

They lay there and watched the bears go around the hill, and presently the old one saw the horses and the camp equipage far below in the valley. She

stood on her hind legs and looked for a long time, evidently much puzzled as to what these strange objects were, but after looking for awhile she came down on all fours again, called her young ones to her by a low cry, trotted off around the hill out of sight, and then made her way back as she had come.

They watched her for a long time, until she was hidden behind the swells of the prairie, and then Jack sat up and said to Hugh, "That's the prettiest thing I ever saw, and I don't feel as if I ever could shoot at a bear again after seeing it."

"Well," said Hugh, "that's saying a good deal, but I tell you I wouldn't have shot at that bear for a farm."

The sun was low when they reached camp on their return. They had eaten when they made camp, but Hugh said that he believed that Jack could eat again, and they cooked a little meat and warmed up some of the coffee that was in the pot, and made up a good fire, by which they sat for a long time.

Hugh said, "I reckon this is about the last regular camp fire we can have. We're getting up into the country now where we're liable to run across Indians, and while I don't think there's a mite of danger to be looked for from any of 'em, still I'd just as leave they wouldn't see us."

"What Indians live in this country, Hugh?"

"Well," said Hugh, "the fact is it's Cheyenne country, but Sioux and Cheyennes live here, and Crows come into it; fact is, it's a kind of anybodys' country. The Piegans come down here and make war on the Crows and Cheyennes, and in old times the Pawnees used to

come up here on their war journeys. You've got to keep your eye open here for all sorts of Indians."

"Well, Hugh, these Indians haven't always been hostile, have they?"

"Not so; there was a long time when they were friendly with everybody. It was only after white people began to come into the country and make trouble of one sort and another that the Indians got bad. You see, the white people didn't know nothing about Indians, and had a kind of an idea that the whites owned the whole country, and the Indians thought that they owned it, because they always had, up to that time; and then there was young men that stole white men's horses and likely some of 'em got killed; so that, on the whole, you can easy see how the wars began; they started about twenty-five years ago. Up to that time the tribes had been all pretty friendly. I won't say that there wasn't bad young men that did bad things, but the old men didn't approve of that, and when they could catch their young men doing anything o' that sort they'd punish them. Why, from 1851 to 1854, I was trading with Indians right along; that is, in winter."

"I wish you'd tell me about that, Hugh."

"Why, sure, I'll tell you all there is to tell. I hired out to old Corcoran one fall. He had a trading post down on the Platte, a little way east of the forks, and the Indians used to come in there sometimes, but there was other posts, and he didn't get as much trade as he thought he ought to; so he hired me to travel around to the camps, and stop with the Indians and trade with them, and fetch in what furs I got to

the post. I started out that first winter with a big wagon, hauled by bulls, and with quite a lot o' trade goods, to find the Cheyenne camp. I remember we'd heard that they were up on Horse Creek, and I started up there. It took me a long time to get there, for bulls don't travel very fast, you know, and when I got there I found they'd moved over onto the Platte, so I had to follow 'em there, and when I got there they were just moving out to go further up the stream, to above where Fort Laramie stands, and I had to trail along with 'em. However, at last they got located for the winter, and I went into Spotted Wolf's lodge and lived there with him. After I got there and unpacked my goods, Spotted Wolf sent a crier out through the camp, and told the Indians that I was there and ready to trade, and before very long I had my store agoing."

"Well, what did you trade to them, Hugh?" asked Jack.

"Well, there's one thing I didn't trade to 'em, and that is whiskey. That was before the days when anybody thought of trading liquor to the Indians, though of course now and then in a fort they gave a man a dram, as they called it; but in them days there wasn't never no trading of liquor. I had tobacco and red cloth, and beads and little mirrors, and some silver coins that they used to hammer out plates from to wear on their heads."

"Oh, I know! I've seen pictures of Indians with great silver plates on their scalp locks, and big ones at the top and little ones running down to the end."

"That's it, that's just what I mean. Well, I lived

pretty near the whole winter in that camp. The Indians had plenty of dried meat and back fat, and tongues, and we lived well. Once in a while I'd go out up into the hills and kill a deer, or a couple of antelope; and two or three times the buffalo came close to the camp, in good weather, so that we made a killing; so we had fresh meat during a good part of the winter. Along in the end of February or first of March I had all the robes and furs that my team could haul, and I started back. I'd taken a half breed boy with me to drive the bulls, and we got along all right till we got down pretty close to Scott's Bluffs. When we got there I noticed that one of the bulls was kind of sick. I didn't know what was the matter with him. We drove along till night, and camped, and the next morning that bull was dead. We went on, and the next day two more of the bulls seemed sick, and the next morning they were dead; so we couldn't go no further. I unloaded the wagon, piled up the bales of robes all around it, went into camp there, and sent the boy on to old Corcoran, to get some more bulls. I expected him back in about six or seven days, but I was eighteen days there in camp before he showed up again. I tell you, them was long days, too. Nothing to do except to sit there and watch them bales of fur, and cook three meals a day. I got terrible tired of it.

"After I'd been there about a week, one morning I saw an Indian dog on the prairie, about a hundred yards off. He was sneaking around, looking this way and that way, and when he saw me move about the camp, he just sat down and watched me. I walked outside my stockade and called to him, but he didn't

pay no attention, just sat there. I was kind of uneasy when I saw him, for I thought maybe a party of Indians might be coming along, and if they did, and took a notion to them furs, there was nothing to stop them carrying 'em all off; but nobody showed up. The next morning the dog was still there. I went out and walked toward him, but as fast as I walked toward him, he walked away, and I couldn't get nearer than about a hundred yards; so I went back to the robes and figured what I should do. I wanted to get hold o' that dog, for I was powerful lonesome, and I thought he'd be kind o' company. I went back to the camp, and when I got there the dog had come back to the place where he was at first and was settin' there. I took a piece of dried meat and went out to where the dog was, and there I scattered a few chips of meat on the ground, and then went back to camp, and every few feet as I went I'd cut off a little piece of meat and drop it on the ground. When I got back, the dog had come to the place where I put the first meat, and was nosing around, picking it up, and after a while he struck the trail of meat toward camp, and came along pretty slowly, pretty shy and suspicious, until he was about half way between the place where he started and the stockade. He wouldn't come any further than that. I sat on the bale of robes and talked to him, and called him, and coaxed him, and he'd look at me and put back his ears and wag his tail, but he was afraid. I worked with that dog that way three days, before I could get him inside of the stockade, but on the fourth day he would come to me, as I sat by the fire, and take pieces of meat out of my hand,

and after a while he lay down on the other side of the fire and went to sleep. That night I got my hand on him and patted him, and coaxed him, and then he saw that I was friendly, and from that time he wasn't afraid. I tell you he was good company to me, and I got to think a heap of him before that half breed got back. He was a pretty nice looking dog, too; had dark brown hair, so that he looked some like a beaver; so I called him Beaver. He got to know his name right soon, and he stayed with me for four years; and one time, when I was in the Cheyenne camp, he disappeared. I always believed some of them Cheyenne women got hold of him and killed him for a feast."

"Well, that's a good story, Hugh. I wish I could have been the boy that drove that team. I'd like to have spent a winter in an Indian camp; and above all, in those old times."

"Yes, son, I expect you'd have liked it right well. There was a heap o' difference between Indians then and now; they were right good people then, they hadn't picked up many white men's ways; so long as you treated 'em well they gave you the very best they had, and all you wanted of it. There wa'nt any beggars then, and the men you made friends with couldn't do enough for you. Of course when I went into old Spotted Wolf's lodge, and used it for a store and a boarding house, I made him some little presents, like two or three yards of red cloth, and three or four strings of beads and a mirror or two to his women. That is all it cost me to stop there all winter, board, lodging and mending all attended to for me."

"Well," said Jack, "I wish I could have seen some of those old days."

"You're going to see a heap this summer, son, that will be new to you, and you'll see a lot of old-time Indians and old-time Indian ways, up where we're going."

By this time darkness had fallen, and the sky was full of stars. The fire had burned down, and the air was growing cool. They spread their beds, and before long were sleeping soundly.

CHAPTER VII.

AN INDIAN WAR PARTY.

WHEN Hugh and Jack started next morning the sky was overcast, and a cold wind blew from the north. Before they had travelled far, it began to rain. Soon the rain changed to snow and it grew very cold. They put on their coats and slickers, and for an hour or two travelled through a howling snow-storm. Suddenly the wind ceased, the snow stopped falling, the sun came out, and it grew very warm. The snow which had covered the ground speedily melted, and again they travelled along over a summer prairie.

It was near mid-day when Hugh suddenly drew up his horse, and motioned to Jack to ride up beside him. He pointed to the ground, where Jack saw many old tracks of horses, and besides these, a half dozen ruts in the soil, like those made by wagon wheels, but irregular, moving from side to side as they proceeded, and looking as if something had been dragged along the ground, following in some degree the inequalities of its surface. Jack could see that these marks, as well as the hoof prints, had been made a good while before, yet after the grass had begun to grow in the spring. The trail pointed nearly in the direction which they were following, so that by keeping on, they would cross it at an acute angle.

"There, son," said Hugh, "there's been a camp of people along here."

"Indians?"

"Yes, quite a bunch of 'em. There was quite a band of horses, and the lodge poles and travois, as you see, make a pretty big trail. I expect there must be a dozen lodges of 'em at least; maybe more."

"Oh," said Jack, "I was wondering what those queer marks were; those are the travois, are they?"

"Yes, them and the lodge poles. You know, when they're moving over the prairie they tie a bunch of lodge poles on either side of the horse, over his withers, and the big ends of the poles drag on the ground; that's what's cut the prairie up this way. Them people are going pretty near the same way we're going, but it's three or four weeks since they've passed. I've a notion we'll follow this trail for a while, and see which way they're going. If they seem to be going the same way we are, we'll branch off and travel closer to the mountains, where the country is rougher and there's more timber."

Hugh rode on, close by the trail, and Jack followed, driving the pack horses. A mile or two further along, Hugh stopped again, and Jack rode up to him. Hugh pointed again to the ground before him, and then got off and carefully inspected a moccasin track in the trail that looked much fresher than the others. "Well," said he, as he stood up after looking carefully at it, "I don't like that very much. Somebody's been along here quite a while after the bulk of these people passed. It's hard to tell much about that track, because it's been rained on, but it looks to me as if it

wa'n't more'n a day or two old. You go back and drive the horses on slowly, and I'll see whether I can make anything out of this fresh trail or not."

For an hour or two Jack followed Hugh, who went on quite slowly, frequently dismounting and looking at a track, and then sometimes going on foot for some little distance before mounting again. At length the trail bore off considerably to the right, and here Hugh left it and struck off sharply to the left. A little later, he called Jack up to him and said, "There seems to be seven or eight men following that trail on foot, and I expect likely it's a war party that's going to try to catch that camp and steal their horses. If that's so, you and me want to get as far away as we can, and I expect the best thing we can do is to strike off toward the mountains, and when we camp to-night to cache as well as we can; and maybe we'll take an early start to-night, after the horses have fed and got rested, and make a quick drive, camping pretty early in the morning, and starting out again just before night, and ride half the night. I don't want to get mixed up in no squabbles between any Indians that we're likely to meet here a way."

They rode on pretty rapidly. Down in a little hollow they stopped, looked carefully over the packs, tightened all the saddles, and then remounting, started at a still better pace, trotting wherever it was level or down hill, and only walking the horses on the steeper slopes. By this time it had become very hot. Jack had tied his slicker and coat on behind the saddle, but was still uncomfortable under the broiling rays of the sun.

It was late in the afternoon when they reached the valley of a stream, and instead of camping in the broad open bottom, which offered a good place to picket the horses, Hugh rode up the stream to where the valley was dotted with frequent clumps of willows, and riding in among these, halted at the edge of a thick clump, midway between the stream and the bluffs.

"Let's unsaddle here," he said, "and tie up the horses among these willows; they ain't so likely to be seen, if anybody happens to look into the creek bed. We'll just build a little fire here, and cook, and then put it right out. I don't want to make no smoke if I can help it."

The loads of the horses and the camp were well concealed, and after the animals had drunk, they tied them rather short to the clumps of brush, intending to move them from time to time to fresh grass.

Although the sun was low now, it was still intensely hot; and down in the bottom, shut in by the bluffs, there was no air stirring. The willow brush, too, cut off what little wind blew up or down the creek, and Jack felt as if he were almost choked. They cooked and ate, and after they had done that, Hugh said, "I'm going up this ravine, back of camp, to get on a hill and take a look. You'd better stay here and watch the horses. Don't move around much, and if you see anybody, just keep out of sight all you can. Of course if anybody tries to take any of the horses, why you'll have to shoot, but I don't expect you'll see no one. I'll be back here pretty quick." Putting his pipe in his pocket, Hugh picked up his gun and disappeared in the willows, and Jack sat and sweltered in the heat.

Presently, he thought he would go down to the brook and get a drink ; so he walked down there, and stood on a little gravelly beach, over which the water poured with a cool, merry rattle. In the stream there were little fish, and as his shadow fell upon it, they darted in all directions, in great alarm. He drank of the water, but it was not so cool as it looked, and then he wet his hands and his wrists and his head. This gave him some relief, and he thought he would take off his clothes and wet his body all over in a pool a foot or two deep, at the foot of the ripple. He put his gun down at the edge of the willows, quickly stripped off his clothes, stepped into the pool, and lay down in it. This was delicious. In a moment he forgot how hot he had been just before, and the water almost reminded him of the morning's ride through the snow storm. Still, as soon as he raised his body out of the stream he was warm enough again. After ducking under two or three times, he happened to look toward his clothes, and as he did so his heart almost stopped beating.

Standing by his clothing and gun, was a tall half-naked man with a robe hanging from his waist and an eagle feather tied in his head. He stood leaning on his gun and looked at Jack with a broad grin of triumph, which showed his white teeth. He did not have the long straight hair of an Indian ; it was crisp and curled tight to his head, and his skin was not brown, but was black ; in fact, he looked like a negro. All this Jack saw, but he had no time to reason about it. He realised only the one thing, that the man was standing over his gun and cartridge belt, while he was

naked and unarmed. Jack cast a glance over his shoulder, with a half formed idea of running away, but in this direction there was no hope, for standing on the opposite bank of the stream, and within a few yards of him was an Indian. About this one, there could be no mistake; his brown trunk was naked, crossed by a belt which held a quiver, the feathered arrows projecting above his left shoulder; on either side of his face, his long hair hung down in braids, and in his right hand he carelessly held a bow and a sheaf of arrows. Crossing his body, over the right shoulder and under the left arm, was a coil of raw hide rope. Jack was surrounded. There was no escape.

Jack did not know what to do. He had never before felt so utterly helpless. He wished he had stayed at camp as Hugh had told him to, but it was all so quick that he was conscious of nothing except a horrible sinking of the heart, and this feeling that he was helpless. These men could kill or capture him. He could make no resistance. Before he had time to think, the man standing by his clothes raised his open right hand above his head, and moved it toward Jack, at the same time saying: "Keep quiet, don't be scared, sonny, you ain't agoin' to be hurt. I want to talk to you."

The sound of these words, spoken in English, gave Jack a tremendous sense of relief; it didn't seem that any one that spoke so good naturedly could wish to harm him. At that moment the Indian behind him called across to the other, and two or three sentences were exchanged between them. Then the negro, for such he proved to be, called out, "Come

ashore, sonny, and put your clothes on. Don't be scared, you won't get hurt. I'll just move your gun a little, though, so it won't be in your way and then we'll talk." Saying this, he moved the gun and cartridge belt a few yards from the pile of clothing, and standing between Jack and his weapons, motioned towards the clothes which Jack began to put on. Then he said, "Where ye goin'?"

Jack had to swallow two or three times before he could speak aloud then he answered in a voice that shook a good deal, "We're going up north to the Piegan camp."

"What ye goin' to do there?" came next.

"We're going to visit John Monroe, and stay in the camp all summer."

"Who's them Piegans ye're talkin' about?" said the negro.

"Why," said Jack, "they're a tribe of Indians up north."

"Who's John Monroe, ye was speaking of?" said the negro.

"He's a half breed, Hugh says, that was raised in the Piegan camp; always lived with them. He was down last summer to our ranch, and he asked Hugh and me to come up this summer and visit him."

On receiving this reply, the negro thought for a little while, and then talked in the unknown tongue to his companion, who had now crossed the stream and was standing near Jack. After the two had spoken for a few moments, the negro again turned to Jack, and said, "Who's that old man ye're travellin' with?"

"That's Hugh Johnson," said Jack; "he works on my uncle's ranch, down south."

Suddenly the negro threw back his head and laughed very heartily for a long time; then he said to Jack, "Come on, sonny, and get your gun; we'll go to your camp with you. Seems queer, you all goin' up to see the Piegans, meet a Piegan war party down here. I'm a Piegan, myself. This here's young Bear Chief, and there's five other young men in this brush all around us. We see you when you come down, and young Bear Chief see the old man, and knowed him; but I thought we'd better make sure, and when he went upon the hill, and you come down here and went in swimmin', I thought we'd talk to you. You see, we're friendly," and he stepped up to Jack and shook hands with him heartily, and the Indian did the same.

"My name's Hezekiah Alexander," said the negro. He seemed delighted to have an opportunity to talk English. "I have been with the Piegans more'n twenty years. I was raised down in Tennessee, myself. I belonged to old Marster Alexander. One day the overseer give me a terrible hard whipping and I run. I was only thirteen years old. I smuggled myself on board a Memphis packet, and got across to the Illinois side, and worked north mighty quick. I came up into this country as boy for Mr. Culbertson, of the American Fur Company, but I didn't stay long with him, but joined these Indians, and been with 'em ever since. I got a wife and four babies in the camp: you'll see 'em this summer."

Jack had passed so quickly from despair to joy, and from joy to confidence that he had hardly recovered his self-possession or his voice as yet. Carrying his gun he led the way up to the camp, where, as soon as

he came in sight of it, he saw Hugh standing, frowning, as if angry or puzzled, and holding his gun in the hollow of his left arm. As soon as they were close to camp, Jack called out, "It's all right, I guess, Hugh; these are Piegans;" but Hugh's expression did not alter until the Indian stepped up to him, and tapping his own breast, as he said, "*Nínnah okyaíyu*," stretched out his hand toward him. Then Hugh's face changed, and he smiled in recognition as he said, "Why, so it is," and shook hands very heartily with the young man.

While Hezekiah and Bear Chief talked eagerly to Hugh in the Piegan tongue, Jack had time to recover his equilibrium, and when he had done this he stared at the two strangers with all his eyes. They were dressed almost alike, but while Bear Chief's face was painted, Hezekiah's was not, and showed a thin mustache, but no beard. Bear Chief's scalplock hung down to between his shoulders, and was ornamented by a large flat pink shell, two inches in diameter. Hezekiah, of course, had no side braids, but he had a little short scalplock, which stuck straight out behind from his woolly head, and at the base of this, an eagle's feather was tied. Jack noticed that as the two talked with Hugh, Hezekiah frequently laughed loudly, while Bear Chief's face was always grave and earnest. Presently the Indian rose to his feet, and strode off into the brush, while the negro turned to Jack, and said, with a broad grin, "I expect you was pretty scairt, sonny, when you see me standing by your gun just now."

"Yes," said Jack, "I was. I never was so badly

scared in my life, and I didn't know what to do. I tell you," he added, turning to Hugh, "I wished I'd stayed in camp, as you told me to."

"Yes," said Hugh, gravely, "that's what you ought to have done. If these fellows had been anything else but Piegans, you'd have been killed, likely, and me, too. These men made the tracks we was looking at this morning; they followed that trail that we was on, until they came to where the people had camped, and then they saw that they'd been gone so long, it wa'n't no use to follow 'em, and they left the trail and struck up toward the mountains, to rest. They've been out quite a long time. Where was the camp," he continued, turning to Hezekiah, "when you left it?"

"They was camped on the Mussel-shell," answered the negro, "but they talked of moving up north onto the Marias before long. I expect you'll find 'em there; or, maybe further north, either near the Sweet-grass Hills, or maybe over close to the mountains; maybe over by Chief Mountain, or on some stream near it."

A moment later, Bear Chief returned accompanied by another Indian, and after speaking a few words to Hugh, sat down, and taking his fire bag from his belt, drew out a large, curiously carved, black stone pipe and its stem, fitted them together, and drawing his knife, commenced to cut some tobacco. One by one, other Indians came marching into camp, until, including Hezekiah, there were seven there. They were a stalwart group of men, all young, yet full grown, except two, who were boys, one of them about Jack's age, and the other a little older. As they talked,

Hezekiah gave Jack a hasty sketch of what they had done since they left the Piegan camp. They had seen no enemies, and made no war. Once, as they were travelling along, they saw, far off, people coming, making a great dust. They hid on top of a high butte, and watched these people, who passed within a half mile of where they were. They were soldiers, and the Indians kept very close until they had passed out of sight, and then started on to put as great a distance as possible between themselves and the troops. Their food gave out at one time, and they were two days without anything to eat; then, one of the young men killed an elk, and they feasted, and dried a little of the meat. The next day a buffalo bull was killed, and they dried more meat; and since then had had plenty to eat. Now they were thinking of turning their steps northward, following close along the foot-hill of the mountains, hoping to find some camp of enemies, and take some horses.

While they were talking, Hugh built a fire, and gave half an antelope to two of the young men to roast, while he baked some bread and made a pot of coffee. Then the Indians were invited to eat, and feasted on the unwonted luxuries. Again, Bear Chief filled the pipe, and as they sat around in a circle, it passed from hand to hand, each one, except Jack, drawing in several whiffs of the smoke; and each one, also, holding the stem in succession toward the sky, the earth, and the four points of the compass, and speaking a few words. Jack at the time did not understand what this meant, but Hugh afterward explained to him that they were offering prayers. After this was over, Bear

Chief stood up and tightened his belt about his waist, and all the others did the same; then, after a few words with Hugh, all gravely shook hands with the two whites, and they filed into the brush. Hezekiah remained a moment behind the others, and said, "Well, good-bye, Mr. Johnson, good-bye, sonny; you'll get to camp before we do, but we'll be pretty close behind you. I don't expect we're goin' to make no war this trip; I dreamed we wouldn't. Don't feel hard toward me, sonny, 'cause I scared you to-day. I wouldn't o' done it, only I was afraid ye might run for your gun, and shoot some of us, if I didn't get there first. Good-bye," and he followed the Indians into the willows. A little later, Hugh and Jack caught a glimpse of them, walking in single file up the valley, their brown bodies glistening in the sun, and the feathers in their heads nodding as they walked.

"Well, son," said Hugh, "I don't know which of us was the most scared this afternoon, but if you was scared as bad as I was, I'm mighty sorry for ye."

"Well, Hugh, nobody could have been scared as badly as I was. I expected to feel the arrows going through me every second, for a little while. Why, when I first saw Hezekiah standing there I thought I'd die. If he hadn't spoken right away I don't know what I'd have done. It don't seem as if I could have stood it. It seemed the longest time after I'd seen him before he spoke, and yet it couldn't have been more than half a minute. When I first saw him standing there smiling, I thought he was just laughing because he'd got me, but when he made that sign and spoke English I felt like crying, I was so glad."

"Well," said Hugh, "you ve got to be more careful; you hadn't no business to go away from camp today, and if you'd got killed, I don't know what I'd have done."

CHAPTER VIII.

DODGING INDIANS.

THE night after Jack's capture by the Piegans passed quietly and very early the next morning they continued their journey, travelling fast, but very cautiously. At every considerable rise of the prairie which gave a wide view over the country, Hugh halted Jack and the animals, and went alone to the top of the hill, from which he scanned the prairie with care before showing himself. Once or twice signs of people were seen, but in each case the trail was an old one, made in spring when the ground was wet and the grass just starting.

One day after they had made camp, Hugh left Jack to watch the horses, and climbed on foot to the top of a lofty butte nearby. When he returned to camp he told Jack that they must move on as soon as it was dark, and they gathered up the horses and brought them close to camp, and soon after the sun had set, packed and rode away.

"There's a camp of people down the creek, not very far off," Hugh said. "From the top of the hill I saw two sets of hunters carrying their meat to camp, and two or three miles below here I saw an old woman gathering wood. I don't know who the people are, likely enough they're Crows, and friendly; but they

may be Sioux or Cheyennes, and I don't want to take no chances; so we'd better pack up and light out. Them Piegans will think they missed a great chance when they didn't stay with us."

"I suppose there's some danger that some of these hunters might walk right into our camp at any time," said Jack.

"Yes," said Hugh, "I'm kind o' surprised they didn't do it. We'll be lucky if we get off without them seeing us. From now on, until we cross the Yellowstone we've got to go pretty careful; that'll be in two or three days though, I hope."

"Why," said Jack, "are we as close to it as that?"

"Yes," said Hugh, "if we could go straight ahead, and travel fast without stopping, we could get there in two days."

They travelled almost all the night, and toward morning Jack grew very sleepy. By this time the pack horses were so well trained that they needed no driving whatever, but kept along close behind the horse that Hugh led; so Jack dozed in his saddle through the latter half of the night. Toward morning it grew quite cool, and he put on his coat. The country had now become rough with high hills, and they were following the valley of a river, on either side of which steep buffs stood outlined against the sky. Suddenly Hugh stopped his horse, all the pack horses came to a stand, and Jack was aroused from his doze by the sudden halting of his horse. He could see the animals just ahead of him, but could not see Hugh. Presently, however, he heard a horse's tread, and in a moment Hugh stopped beside him and said, "We've

got to get out of this ; there's a camp down the creek ; I just heard a dog bark. We'll turn up this side ravine, and travel until it gets light, and then cache in the brush, or in the timber, if there is any."

An hour later, with the horses they were hidden in a great patch of plum brush and pines trees, near the head of the ravine. Not far away was a high conical hill which overlooked the valley that they had left, and Hugh, climbing to the summit of this, walking all the time among the pines, looked up and down the valley. Almost beneath him, so near that it seemed as if he might fire a rifle ball into it, stood the lodges of a camp, all unknowing of the watcher.

Hugh stayed there for a long time, to see what the Indians were doing, and, also, to learn, if possible, what they were likely to do ; that is to say, whether they would probably stay where they were, or were getting ready to move.

They had been there a long time. All through the camp the grass was worn from the ground ; well-beaten trails led about through the sage brush and a course for playing the stick game had been cleared of brush and stones. All about the camp were drying-scaffolds, hung with strips of meat, some of it dry and brown, some bright red, and some almost white. Hugh wished that he had Jack with him, so that he might point out to him all the features of the camp. He was too uneasy, however, to think much about that. He watched the direction taken by the men as they left the camp, and saw that most of them went off up and down the creek, though some crossed it and rode up a broad valley that came down through the bluffs on the other

side. On the tops of some of the lower hills he saw, standing or sitting, the figures of men wrapped in their robes or summer sheets, but all had their faces turned toward the valley, or up or down the stream; none looked back toward the hills. Hugh grumbled a little to himself, as he lay there, and said, "Yes, that's all right, but suppose some old squaw, with her dog and travois, should come up our ravine after a load of wood. Then where'd we be? The dog would sure smell us, and we'd have to catch the old woman, and maybe kill her, or else she'd have the whole camp buzzing about that brush patch, like a nest o' bees."

About the middle of the day he turned to go back, and before he had got half way to the horses, he saw just what he had feared. An old woman, followed by a dog dragging a small travois, was slowly making her way up the ravine.

Hugh travelled along among the pines, watching her to see what she would do, and it was with great satisfaction that he saw her stop more than a mile below the horses, and commence to attack a fallen pine stick, with the great stone maul that she carried. She worked for more than an hour, and at length, having collected a large pile of wood, she bound a part of it on the dog travois, made up another huge bundle which she lifted on her own back, and then started down the ravine to return to the camp.

When Hugh reached the horses Jack was not there, but presently he crept into camp through the brush, looking anxious and worried. His face lighted up when he saw Hugh, and he said, "What was that hammering and chopping I heard down below, Hugh?

I listened to it, sitting here, until I couldn't stand it any longer, and then I crept out to the edge of the brush to see what it was."

Hugh told Jack about the woman, and said, "Now, just as soon as it gets dark, we've got to start over to the other creek, and take down that. I want to put fifteen or twenty miles behind us before we stop, but when we do stop we've got to let these horses feed, and give 'em some water. I believe the best thing we can do is to keep on the divide, after we get up there, and not travel down these river valleys. The country seems to be full of Indians. Just as soon, though, as we can get across the Yellowstone we'll be out of the range of these people and not likely to meet anybody, except Piegans, and maybe Crows or Gros Ventres; they'll all be friendly."

The horses had been tied up to trees all day long and had had no chance to eat, though their packs had been taken off so that they were pretty well rested. As it grew dark they were packed again, and Hugh led the way up onto the plateau, along which they rode almost the whole night. Toward morning they came to a little stream, and camped in the underbrush on the edge of a little park, where they let the horses feed until day, and then brought them into the brush and tied them up. After the sun had risen they built a small fire, cooked some food, and then put the fire out.

"Now, son," said Hugh, "you lie down and go to sleep, and I'll go up onto this hill, and stand guard. I'll call you about the middle of the day, and let you watch till nearly night. I feel pretty sleepy, myself."

Jack took his robe, and spreading it out of sight in the willows, was soon fast asleep.

The sun was well toward the west before Hugh's hand on his shoulder awoke Jack, who sat up, bewildered for a moment, not knowing where he was.

"Come, son," said Hugh, "it's near the middle of the afternoon; you go up on that hill and watch for awhile, and I'll sleep. Just about sunset you come down and wake me, and we'll eat, and pack up and go on. Keep a good lookout, and don't show yourself, and if anybody should come right close, just slip down through the gulch and come back here to me. These people ain't got no idee that we're around, and I don't want 'em to have." Jack took his gun and started up the hill, and Hugh took his place in the bushes and went to sleep. For some time nothing was to be seen from the hill-top, but an hour before sunset Jack saw three horsemen come in view, riding across the plain, as if they were going from the river bottom on the east, westward toward to camp. They rode slowly, leading two pack horses, apparently loaded, but they were so far off that he could not be sure of anything about them, except that they were people.

A little later he saw something move on the hillside close to him, and for a moment was startled; then, as the object came into view, he saw that it was only a little kit-fox. The first that appeared was followed by three others, and the four moved up over the grass, quartering the ground, and smelling here and there, almost like hunting dogs when they work ahead of their masters, searching for birds. Now and then one

would make a sudden pounce in the grass, and then toss up its head and seem to swallow something. They worked around the hill, most of the time in sight, but sometimes hidden by elevations of the ground, until they had passed from Jack's left hand almost to his right; then they stopped on a little level bench of the hill, in plain view, and while the largest of the four lay down, the other three had a game of romps, just such as three puppies might have. One sprang upon another, caught it by the back of its neck, and seemed to shake it, while the one so attacked turned on its enemy, caught the skin of its shoulder in its teeth, and the two rolled over and over, seeming to fight fiercely. After a moment or two of this, the third puppy plunged at the squirming pair, which at once separated and dashed away, running as hard as they could, while the third pursued. They kept this up for some little time and then, seeming to weary of the play, all three returned to the larger one, and all lay down close together, so that they formed just a mass of fur, almost the exact colour of the prairie grass.

Jack waited and watched, but nothing happened. High in the air he heard the squeaking cry of the prairie night-hawk, and every now and then the rush of its wings, as it stooped toward the earth. One of the birds which he was watching, darted to the ground, close to where the little foxes lay, to their evident astonishment and alarm, for all four sprang to their feet and looked about as though greatly startled. From the hillside below him the song of the meadow lark rang out sweet and clear, and in the brush where

the horses were tied and Hugh was sleeping, there were faint songs and twitterings of birds that were resting there, or seeking their evening meal. No more people were seen, and when the sun had reached the tops of the high bluffs to the west, Jack slipped cautiously down the ravine, and went through the brush to where Hugh lay. As he approached the spot, Hugh threw off the robe and stood up, and with a glance at Jack and at the sky, shook himself, and said, "Well, did ye see anything?"

"Yes," said Jack, "about an hour ago I saw three people leading two pack horses right over toward where the camp is; but that is all I saw."

"Well, I guess we'd better pack up and make tracks, without lighting any fire. The chances are no one would see it if we did cook, but we won't take no risks."

They went into the brush, untied the horses, watered them, and put on the packs, tying up each horse after his load was secured. When this was done, Hugh said, "Now I'm going up to the top of the hill to take another look, and if there ain't nothing in sight, we'll move."

Hugh was not gone long, and when he returned he said, "It's all right, I guess, but before we get out of this brush we'll stop and take a look from the other side." They mounted and passed slowly along, crossing the brook and climbing the opposite hill. Before riding out of the willows, however, Hugh dismounted, walked to the edge, and looked over the plain before him. After a moment he turned and signed to Jack to dismount and to come towards him. Jack did so

very carefully, and Hugh pointed out into the open, where Jack saw a large dog trotting along. "That dog belongs to the camp," said Hugh, "and likely there are people right around here. We'll have to wait here until it gets plumb dark. There may be two or three lodges camped here on this creek, though I can't hardly believe it. Anyhow, we won't take no chances; we'll stop here till dark. You go back and stay with the horses, and leave me here to watch."

Jack returned to the horses, and taking the bridles of the two saddle horses, he stood there with them at the heads of the pack horses, waiting and listening. It grew darker and darker, and presently a voice at his elbow said, "Well, that dog's gone off, and I haven't seen or heard anything; we might as well go too;" and with that they mounted and rode out over the plain.

They travelled all night, stopping for two or three hours about midnight to let the horses feed, and when day broke next morning, they could see far before them the low line of green timber which marked the course of the Yellowstone River. A little later Hugh rode down into the valley of a small stream, and they made camp and turned all the horses loose on the bottom.

"We've got to stay here and watch them horses feed until they get their bellies full," said Hugh, "and then we'll take and tie 'em up. I'm going to start to-night, and not stop until we've crossed the river. After we get on the other side I'll feel that we're safe."

All through the day they watched the horses, and

rested and slept, and at night they set out again on their journey. The next morning found them riding down into the wide bottom of the Yellowstone, and over toward the water. It looked deep, swift and turbulent to Jack, but Hugh, turning to the right, rode down the stream for a mile and a half, and then descending through a little ravine, rode out into the water. Here Jack could see that there was a long bar running diagonally across the river, over which the water rippled, showing that it was not deep. Just before he entered the stream, Hugh called back, "Keep the horses well up, son, and don't let them turn off up or down stream. The water's deep on either side of this bar, but if they follow me they'll go through all right."

Jack watched Hugh as he rode along, and saw that the water scarcely came up to his horse's knees until he had nearly reached the opposite bank, when it suddenly grew deeper and came half way up the horse's side, so that Hugh had to take his feet out of the stirrups and hold them up, to keep from getting wet. The water here appeared to run with great violence, and Hugh turned his horse's head a little up stream so that the full force of the current would not strike the animal broad side on. Jack had kept the pack horses close behind Hugh, and they followed him well, and at last all hands crawled out on the bank.

"Now," said Hugh, as he drew up his horse, "I feel easier in my mind. We've got past the only place I was anyways nervous about, and from now on we'll have straight, easy going, if I ain't mistaken."

CHAPTER IX.

A BIGHORN IN CAMP.

THE day was spent in the river bottom, all the horses being allowed to feed at liberty, except one which was picketed. A few hours before sunset they packed up and travelled north for two or three hours stopping to camp for the night on the banks of a little stream which flowed into the Yellowstone River. This valley was narrow, and on either side high bad-land bluffs rose to the prairie above, which was dry and already brown, though mid-summer was not yet here. That night they had a long rest, making up then for the many hours of night travelling and day watching which they had undergone during the last week.

As usual, Hugh was the first to turn out of his blankets; that is to say, he was the first to awake and sit up, but before he had freed himself from the coverings, he saw across the narrow valley, and just below the top of the bluffs, something that made him call Jack sharply, but in a low tone of voice. Standing on the bare earth, and scarcely to be distinguished from it, except by the dark shadows which they cast, were three great mountain rams, splendid with their stout curling horns, looking curiously at the horses feeding below them.

"Wake up, son, quick!" said he, "there's your chance; you'll never get a better shot at sheep than that."

Awakened from his sound sleep, Jack hardly understood what was said, but the word, sheep, caught his ear, and he flew up suddenly to a sitting posture, like a Jack springing out of its box.

"Not too quick," said Hugh; "easy now; don't lose your head. Where's your gun and cartridges? You want to kill one of them rams, and not leave me to try to do it, just as they're jumping over the ridge. Take the middle one, he's the biggest, and shoot a little high on him; it's over a hundred yards, maybe a hundred and twenty-five; aim just above the point of his breast, and hold steady; if you make a line shot you're sure to get him."

The biggest ram was standing with his head toward them, and his hips a little higher than his shoulders. The other two stood quartering, one up and one down the valley, and any one of the three offered a fair shot for an ordinary rifleman. Jack drew his gun out from beneath his blankets, loaded it, and drawing up his knees, and resting his elbow on one of them, drew a careful bead at the point named by Hugh, and fired. At the report, the ram shot at gave a long bound down the hill, and then stood for an instant. The other two had each sprung into the air, and now all three turned and began to climb the hill, the two smaller ones at a gallop, the other walking.

"Shall I shoot again, Hugh?" said Jack, much excited.

Hugh still sat with his blankets around his legs, and

a smile on his face, as he answered, "I don't believe I'd waste another cartridge; he'll do us for quite a ways yet."

As he spoke the last ram turned off to one side, and disappeared behind a little ridge on the shoulder of the bluff.

"Ah," said Jack, with a long sigh of contentment, "I thought I heard the bullet strike, but I wasn't dead sure."

"Well, I guess he's stopped over there somewhere: we surely would have seen him if he'd run off anywhere. What's that?" As Hugh spoke, Jack heard a clatter of stones, which to his ears sounded as if the whole face of the bluff were sliding down, and a moment later a cloud of dust, rising over the shoulder of the little ridge behind which the sheep had disappeared, showed that some commotion was taking place over there. A moment more and the great sheep appeared, slowly rolling over and over down the hill, his legs sticking up in the air at one moment, then his back and great horns showing, as he rolled on toward the valley.

"Ha!" said Hugh, "he's saving us quite a lot of packing. Now, the first thing we'll do is to go over there and butcher him, and bring the meat into camp; and then we'll eat breakfast."

They crossed the stream, which was only two or three inches deep, on a wide riffle, and were soon standing over the game. It was a magnificent animal; far handsomer, Jack thought, than any game he had as yet killed—a picture of strength, grace and beauty.

"Well," said Jack, "I did hope that maybe some-

time during the year I'd get a chance to shoot a sheep, but I never expected to have it come so soon."

"And I expect you never thought a sheep would walk right into camp to be killed, either."

"No, I surely didn't think that."

"Now, I expect," said Hugh, "that you'd like to save this skin, and the head, too; it's a good head, and you may kill a whole lot of sheep before you'll ever see a better, and yet I don't like the idea of packing this head all over the country; I wonder if we couldn't cache it somewhere, and then try to come back here and get it when we're going south this fall."

"That would be good, but how would you ever find it again? Of course you couldn't be sure of coming right back to this place. You might have to travel up or down the Yellowstone a long way, hunting for the head."

"Don't you fret yourself about that, son; I know where this creek is just as well as you know where the corrals are, down at the ranch. Many a time I've camped here, and if we hang this head up in a tree somewhere near here, I can find it the darkest night that ever was; but what I'm thinking about is, that maybe we won't come back this way, and I don't want to travel a hundred miles just to get a sheep's head. Anyhow, I'll cut the skin of the neck low down, and we can make up our minds later what we'll do with the skull."

It did not take very long to butcher and cut up the sheep, but several trips had to be made before the meat and hide and head had been carried to the camp.

"Now," said Hugh, "I want you to make the fire

and cook breakfast, and I'm going to dry some of this meat."

While Jack was at work getting breakfast, Hugh stretched two of the sling ropes double, between a tree and some tall bushes that grew near it, and then went to work at the carcass of the sheep, cutting the flesh from it in wide flakes, of which before long he had a considerable pile. These he hung over the sling ropes, much as a laundress would hang handkerchiefs on a clothes line, and before Jack had announced that breakfast was ready, one of the lines was covered with red meat, which was already beginning to turn brown, in the rays of the hot sun.

"Whew!" said Hugh, as he came up to the fire to eat his breakfast, "this is going to be a scorching hot day. I believe we'll stop here for a while, and give that meat a chance to dry, and the horses a chance to rest up, and feed good; they're beginning to get poor, and I don't wonder, for they haven't had much chance to eat for the last six days. Is that all the breakfast you've got?" he continued, looking at the frying-pan full of meat which Jack had cooked; "why, that ain't a marker; I could eat all that myself. You'll have to put on some more before long, if you've got anything like the appetite I've got."

Breakfast was a deliberate meal, and greatly enjoyed. Jack thought that the flesh of the mountain sheep was the best meat that he had ever eaten, and said so.

"It's good," said Hugh. "It's sure good; but don't make up your mind it's the best meat in the world till we get among the buffalo; then you'll be eating what

the Pawnees call, real meat, and if you don't say that fat cow is the best meat in the world, I don't want a cent. Did you notice anything when we came down into the valley last night?"

"Yes, I saw where some cattle had been."

"Ah, that's what I meant; but them cattle ain't the white-horned spotted cattle that you're used to see; they're the cattle that belong here on these prairies."

"What, are those buffalo tracks?"

"That's what. They're old, but there's been buffalo here this spring, and I miss my guess if we don't see some of 'em before many days have passed."

"Well," said Jack, "I'm going over to take a look those tracks, so I'll know 'em again when I see 'em."

"Well," said Hugh, "you won't have to go across the creek, because there's plenty of 'em right down below here. The first thing I want you to do," and he put his hand in his pocket and drew out his pipe, "is to help me to slice up the rest of this meat, and put it up where it'll dry. With the sun as hot as it is to-day, it won't take long for it to get hard, and maybe toward night we can pack up and travel a few miles further on."

They now returned to the sheep's carcass, and before long almost the whole of it was hanging in the sun to dry. One of the hams and a sirloin were saved, to be eaten as fresh meat; the rest, when dry, would be packed in a sack and carried with them.

By the time they had completed their task it was mid-day, and the sun was blazing down with all its force into the little valley where the camp was.

"Whew!" said Hugh, "it's hot here, ain't it? Now

let's go down to the creek and wash up, and then we'll fry some sheep meat, and set in the shade for an hour or two; and then, if you like, we'll take this sheep's head down below here, and maybe get it when we come back in the fall."

"All right," said Jack, "I'd like to put it up somewhere where it will be safe, because I want to take it home with me and have it mounted, and give it to mother. You see, I didn't take anything back with me last year, except those hides, and I'd like real well to be able to point to this head hanging in the house, and tell the fellows how I killed it."

"Well," said Hugh, there's a safe place to put it, not more'n a mile away, and the only thing is not to forget to come this way when we're going south in the fall."

After a hearty meal, and an hour or two of rest in the shade, Hugh said, "Now, son, round up your horses and we'll start. Suppose you ride the black to-day, and leave Pawnee and the others here; I'll ride the bucking dun."

Jack walked out toward where the horses were standing, and, drawing his whistle from his pocket, blew a shrill blast. At once all the horses raised their heads and looked toward him, and in a moment Pawnee started, trotting across the flat, and all the other horses followed. Pawnee trotted straight up to Jack and reached out his nose toward him, and Jack, taking from his pocket a piece of bread, held it toward the horse, which nosed it for a moment and then took it between his lips and began to eat it. While he was doing this, Jack passed his right arm, which held the

rope, around the horse's neck, knotted it through in a bowline, and then stepping quietly around among the other horses, passed the other end of the rope over the neck of the black, and tied that. Hugh, meanwhile, had walked around the horses and up to the bucking dun, on the other side, and attached his rope to its neck. Pawnee was then freed, and the two horses to be ridden were led over to where the saddles were.

Hugh was soon saddled up, but before he finished he noticed that Jack was having trouble. He had dropped the rope on the ground, and holding the bridle open, tried to pass it over the head of the black horse, but whenever he did this the horse threw his head up in the air so high that Jack could not reach it. Hugh watched the performance for a little while, and at last saw Jack throw his right arm around the horse's neck, near the head, and again try to put the bridle on, but again the horse raised its head. Jack held on, and was swung quite off his feet, and when the horse lowered its head again and Jack's feet touched the ground he seemed angry, and struck at the horse's nose with his right hand, but did not hit it, and then, very angrily, tried to kick the horse in the belly. The horse stepped a little to one side and Jack had kicked so hard that he sat down very suddenly in a bunch of sage brush.

"Hold on, son," said Hugh, "that ain't no way to manage that horse; you'll never do nothing with a horse by getting angry at him and hammering him; keep cool, and you can conquer most any horse; get mad, and swear and kick and throw clubs, and you will spoil the best horse that ever lived."

"Well, confound it," said Jack, "I can't bridle him and it would make a saint mad to have to do with such a fool of a horse."

"Well, I guess that's so, but even if the saint did get mad, he wouldn't get his horse bridled I want you to have sense, and not make a fool of yourself, even if the horse is one. Throw the bridle down on the ground, now, and put the saddle on him."

Jack felt a good deal ashamed of what he had done, and he knew that what Hugh had said was true, that nothing could be gained by getting angry. He got his saddle, folded the blanket, and saddled the horse. "Now," directed Hugh, "throw the end of your rope across the saddle, so that it hangs down on the off side." Jack did so, and then Hugh called him around to that side of the horse.

"Now," said he, "tie your rope around his fetlock," and when this had been done, he added, "now, take up his foot and bend his knee, and take a couple of turns of your rope around the saddle horn, so's to hold his foot up; now, slip round on the other side and put the bridle on him, quietly; don't be in a hurry."

Jack took up the bridle and opened it, and was about to try to pass it over the horse's head, when Hugh said, "Push against his shoulder hard." Jack did so, and the horse lost its balance a little and awkwardly lifted his front foot and put it down again, so that it could stand steadily.

"Now," said Hugh, "put your bridle on quietly." The horse paid no attention to the bridle, opened his teeth when Jack pressed his jaw, and in a moment the bridle was on and the throat-latch buckled.

"Now, turn his foot loose," said Hugh, "and we'll go on up to that clump of trees." Hugh took the sheep's head in one hand, mounted and started on, and Jack followed. As they rode up the valley, side by side, Hugh said, "That horse you're riding isn't a bad horse, and he isn't rightly a fool horse, either, but your uncle lent him last fall to a cow-puncher that was working for the Bar X outfit, and had lost his horse and stopped with us for a few days. That fellow didn't have the sense that God gave him; he was always hammering his horse in some way or other. If the horse didn't lead good, he'd take a club and pound it over the head. He came pretty near spoiling two or three horses he rode while he was here. Finally, one day Jo found him in the corral, hammering one of them young horses that was rode last summer, with a club, and he took the club away from the fellow and began to hammer him. The fellow tried to draw his gun, but Jo was too quick for him, and clinched him, and got the gun and threw it out of the corral. Then they fought all over the place, until Rube and Mr. Sturgis heard 'em, and came out and stopped it. When your uncle heard what had happened, he told that cow-puncher to take his blankets and walk, and the last they see of him he was walking.

"When you tied up this horse's foot, and gave him a shove, so that he see he wasn't very steady on his legs, you gave him something to think about, and he forgot all about that he didn't want to be bridled, and was just thinking of keeping his right side up."

"Well, Hugh, it's a mighty good thing to know that about taking up a horse's leg. I was awful mad

when I couldn't bridle that horse, and felt as if I'd like to kill him; then when I kicked at him and missed him, and sat down, I felt what a fool I'd been, and I was madder than ever."

"Well, it don't pay for a fellow to lose his head. A man wants to keep his wits about him all the time, and when you get mad and try to fight a horse, whether it's a bad horse or just a scared horse, you're kind o' losing the advantage that a man has over an animal, and putting yourself down on his level."

"That's so, isn't it?" said Jack, "I never thought of it just that way before."

"Yes, that is so; the only thing that a man has got that's much use to him is his sense; a buffalo is bigger and stronger; a deer is swifter; a wolf can crawl around better out of sight, and all them animals are better armed than a man is. It's his sense that gives a man the pull on all of 'em, and makes him able to creep up on 'em and kill 'em, if he wants to; makes him able to tame horses, and makes him smart enough to get up guns and gunpowder, and railways and all them things. So, whatever you do, son, you want to try to hang on to your sense, and never lose it even for a minute. A man that's got a level head, that isn't away up in the air one minute, and away down to the ground another, is the man that's going to come out ahead."

As Hugh finished speaking, they rounded a point of the bluffs and saw before them a group of half-a-dozen box-elder trees, with a few clumps of willows growing beneath them. "There," said Hugh, "if we put that skull up in that thickest box-elder tree it's pretty sure to stay there until we come back. Nothing will

bother it except the magpies, and all they'll do will be to clean off the meat there is on it."

They stopped under the tree, and dismounted. Hugh pointed upward, and Jack, obeying his gesture, quickly scrambled up to the lowest of the branches. Hugh threw him the end of his rope, which Jack caught, and carrying it, climbed up in the thick foliage.

"Now," said Hugh, "you haul up the skull, and hang it by the horns, close to the trunk, across two branches. See that it is so firm that it can't blow down; or, if you can't make it firm, tie it with these buckskin strings that I'll put around the horn." Hugh took two long thongs of buckskin from his pocket, wound them around the horns, and then lifting the skull as high as he could, Jack slowly hauled it up to where he was.

"Here's a bully place," he said, "a branch to hold each horn, and a strong, dry stub coming out, that will support the chin."

"All right," said Hugh, "maybe you'd better tie it, anyhow, with them strings; then we'll be doubly sure that it will stay there."

After a few moments' work, Jack threw down the end of the lariat, and called to Hugh, "It's firm and steady as a rock, now, and I don't believe anything can move it."

"All right," said Hugh; "come on, we'll go back to camp and maybe move on a little further to-night."

A little later they were again in camp.

Two or three hours before sunset they packed up and set out again, travelling until nearly dark, when

they came to a water course which was dry, except for an occasional hole where there was a little mud and stagnant water. Hugh paused and looked about, saying, "We've struck this creek a little too far down; there's a spring just a little above here—right good water." Turning, he rode up the stream and before long called back, "There's the place just ahead; we'll camp there to-night."

For the next two or three days they continued their journey. Jack now had plenty of chance to see buffalo tracks, for it was evident that not long before there had been plenty of buffalo on the prairie here.

CHAPTER X.

BUFFALO.

"HUGH," said Jack, as they sat at breakfast one morning, "oughtn't we to see some buffalo pretty soon? We've been seeing a lot of sign, and it seems to me that it's growing fresher all the time."

"That's so, son," answered Hugh; "it is growing fresher, and I believe that we're liable to see buffalo most any day now. Maybe we'll see some to-day. You took notice that the sign has been growing fresher all the time, but I don't know if you saw that these buffalo are moving just about the same way we are. Of course they ain't travelling; they're just kind o' feeding along, but if you watch the tracks we pass to-day, you'll see that the most of 'em are pointing just about the way we're going. Now, we've been travelling right smart and fast, not stopping for anything, ever since we first struck the sign. When we first saw it, it was right old. Now it's fresh. That means that we are following up the buffalo, and catching up to 'em, and I wouldn't be surprised if we were to see some before we camp to-night." Hugh stopped speaking, filled his pipe, and leaning over toward the fire, picked up a brand and lighted it. "Well," he went on, "if you'll saddle up now, I'll fix up these

dishes, and make up the packs, and we'll move along."

Jack went out and brought in the horses, and tied them up to some bushes. Then he put the saddles on the pack horses, and drew the cinches up on them well, but did not tie them. Next he saddled Hugh's horse, and then his own, in each case leaving the latigos untied. By the time he had returned to the fire, Hugh had made up his packs, and when Jack saw that they were ready, he brought up the pack horses, one by one, and after re-cinching each animal, the loads were speedily in position. The two riders mounted, and they moved off in a single file, Hugh leading, the pack horses following and Jack as usual bringing up in the rear on Pawnee.

All through the morningthey travelled on over the gray prairie. Antelope were plenty and tame, and often ventured within shot of the train, but they had meat in one of the packs, and neither Hugh nor Jack felt like molesting the pretty animals. There were many flowers to be seen on the prairie; bunches of brilliant red or yellow cactus and white poppy bells swinging in the wind. Now and then, in some low places, where it was too damp for the sage to grow, they saw patches of blue and pink lupine, and occasionally a bunch of white flowers, which Hugh had told Jack was the loco; a plant which poisons animals that eat it.

About noon Hugh halted near a little hill, and said to Jack, "Let's leave the pack horses here to feed, and ride up on top of that bluff. I think maybe we'll see something." They did so, and when they reached its crest, Hugh, after looking over the landscape for a few

moments, pointed away to the north, and said, "Buffalo." Jack looked hard, but could see nothing that looked like a buffalo, but far off on the distant hillside he saw some tiny black specks, which he knew must be the longed-for animals.

"Now, Hugh," he said, "how do you know that those are buffalo, and not cattle or horses?"

"Well," said Hugh, "to tell you the truth, I don't believe I can tell you how I know, but I know it all the same. In the first place, in this range of country where we are now, there ain't any cattle or any horses, without they're Indian horses. Now, of course it might be such a thing that there'd be a little bunch of Indian horses scattered out on the hill-side like that, and all of 'em dark coloured animals, but I don't believe it. I wouldn't look to see horses in such a place as that; they're too far from any stream, and they don't look right for horses. At the same time, they're too far off for me to tell by their shape or the way they act that they ain't horses. But you keep on, and before the day's over, we'll see more buffalo, and close to us, too; and maybe before this trip's over, you'll get to know buffalo when you see 'em as far off as that, even if you can't tell how it is you know what they are."

Two or three miles beyond this they stopped at a little stream, where there were a few trees, and unpacked their animals and turned them out to graze, while they built a fire and cooked a meal. After they had eaten, and prepared the packs again, Hugh said, "Now, we'll let these horses eat for an hour longer before packing up, and then we'll start, and if we have

to, we can make quite a long drive before night." They made themselves comfortable under the shade of the tree, and presently Hugh said to Jack, "Son, do you mind the lecture I gave you about hunting, when you first came out into this country, more than a year ago? That was the day you killed your first antelope, I think."

"Yes, of course I remember, Hugh," replied Jack. "I didn't understand everything that you told me then, but I've remembered it all a good many times since, and what you said to me has helped me a whole lot."

"Well," said Hugh, "I expect I did talk a heap that day, but I wanted to kind o' try and start you on the right road. I mind, though, that while I was talking, I kept thinking I was kind o' like one of them professors that we see out in this country sometimes; them fellows that come out to dig bones, and catch bugs, and all sorts of little lizards, snakes and other varmints. I heard one of them talking once, and he just kept right on for two or three hours, telling us about how the earth was made, and how this used to be water where it is all dry now, and a whole parcel of things that I didn't understand, and I don't believe anybody else did, except the man that was talking."

"Well, Hugh," said Jack, "there isn't anybody that knows it all, and these professors know about bones and bugs, and you know about hunting and trailing, and fighting Indians. I suppose there ain't any man but what could teach 'most any other man something."

"That's so, son; you're dead right, but the trouble with most of us is, we set a heap of store by what we know, and we don't think very much of what other

people know. I expect the smartest men of all is them that's always anxious to learn, and always a-learning. But what I set out to say was something about buffalo, and killing buffalo. Now, of course, you're a boy; a pretty sensible boy, I'll allow, but, after all, you're a boy, and you're liable to get excited. Now, you know, we're travelling now; we ain't here for pleasure; we're trying to go somewhere; so if we come on buffalo, right close, sudden, I don't want you to go crazy, and start off to chase 'em. You're here now, a-helping to take care of this pack train, and you mustn't lose your packs. You'll have plenty of chances to kill buffalo; likely you'll have a chance to-day; but when you start in to kill your first buffalo, see that you go at it right. Now, a buffalo is awful easy killed. Where they're plenty, you can creep right up close to 'em, and kill 'em by still hunting, but of course it's lots more fun to run 'em. You've got a good horse, and he'll take you right up to any cow that runs on the prairie. When you get a chance to chase buffalo, remember that you mustn't shoot until you get right up close to 'em. Ride right up close by the cow's side, and then shoot, and your horse will turn off a little, so as to get out of the way in case the cow should charge. You needn't mind your horse at all; he'll take care of himself, and won't step into any badger hole, or fall with you; but you've got to look out for your riding, for if a cow turns quick, and your horse has to whirl quick, you may slide off, if you haven't got the horse well between your legs. Another thing is, that a buffalo stands awful high, and you're likely to shoot too high, and put a lot of

bullets into an animal where they won't hurt it a particle. You must remember that in a buffalo, as in every other animal that I know anything about, the life lies low. If you're on a horse, you'll be shooting down, of course, but try to shoot so that the ball will cut the buffalo only a few inches above the brisket. I've seen lots of young fellows waste ammunition on buffalo; fellows that could shoot pretty well, too; only they didn't know where to shoot; they all shot too high. The boss ribs on a buffalo stick so far up into the air that there's pretty nigh as much of the animal above its backbone as there is below, and that's awful deceiving, and tends to make a man shoot high. Now, I expect likely you'll remember all this that I've told you, and won't have any trouble at all. You take hold of things about hunting quicker than any boy I ever saw."

"I'm much obliged to you for telling me this, Hugh, and I'll try hard to remember it. I expect I'll get excited when I have my first chance to shoot at a buffalo. They're so big, you see; bigger than anything I ever had a chance to shoot at."

"Yes," said Hugh, "maybe you'll feel that way the first time or two; but, Lord! you'll get used to it after a little while, and you'll only want to kill buffalo when you're hungry. Mind what I tell you, though, about your riding. I'd hate almightily to see you go flying off your horse, when you're after a bunch of buffalo, the way you did that time last summer when you were chasing the wolf."

"That's so," said Jack. "I flew a long way that time, but I hope I'm a good deal better rider now than I was then."

"Yes," said Hugh, "I expect you are. You ought to be, anyhow. But I want you to be as careful as you know how. There's been a whole lot of men killed by chasing buffalo; hooked by them, or had their horses fall with them, or been thrown a long way, and had their guns driven through their bodies. I've seen a lot of accidents in my time. Well," he went on, as he lighted his pipe again, "let's saddle up and move."

As they rode on, through the afternoon, they saw more and more buffalo. Several bunches that they passed were not more than a half mile from them, but, though Jack was very anxious to have a shot, he said nothing, feeling pretty sure that his chance would come before very long. Toward evening they came to a little stream, flowing through a narrow valley where there was wood, and a nice grassy flat. Here Hugh halted, and said to Jack, "I did calculate that we'd go on five or six miles further, to the main creek, but I guess maybe we'll stop here and make camp, and then, before we eat, we'll ride out a little way and see if we can't kill some meat. That last antelope is pretty near gone, and it might be such a thing that we could kill a buffalo."

"All right," said Jack, "that will suit me first class."

They took the packs off the horses, picketed them out, and then, tightening their saddles, rode up out of the creek valley, and toward some rough, broken buttes that rose from the prairie two or three miles to the west. Half an hour's riding brought them to a broken country, and, dismounting at the foot of a hill rather taller than the others, they climbed on foot to

its summit. Here Jack saw a curious sight. To the west, many buffalo could be seen; some of them quite near; others, far off. All of them were moving; not running, but walking along in single file, one after another, like so many cows moving through a pasture.

"Why, what are they doing, Hugh?" asked Jack; "and where in the world are they going? They seem to be all travelling, but in different directions. I supposed that when buffalo wanted to go anywhere they all ran off in a great crowd, but these are walking along slowly, but walking as if they were determined to go somewhere."

"That's just what they're doing, son; they're going to water, and each one of them bunches that you see is heading right straight for the nearest water. Some of them look like they was going right down to our camp, and here comes a bunch that are going to pass right close to us. Do you see that trail that passes right at the foot of this hill? Well, that's a buffalo trail, and if I ain't mightily mistaken, them nearest buffalo is going to follow that trail, and come right close by where we left the horses. We'll go down and get 'em and bring 'em up a little further, behind that shoulder, and sit by 'em until the buffalo come, and then you'll have a chance to kill one, and we'll have some fat cow to eat to-night."

"That will be great," said Jack; "of course I'd rather chase them, but then, as you said to-day, we ain't out here for fun, and I don't suppose it would be good sense to run Pawnee down, chasing buffalo. He's been travelling all day, and it wouldn't do him any good to give him a race now."

"That's good sense, son. Take care of your horse, and take care of your gun, always, in this country. When we get to the Piegan camp there'll be a whole lot of chances to run buffalo, and to run 'em with a fresh horse. It would be just foolishness to do it now. Come on." Hugh led the way down the hill to the horses, and bringing the animals a little higher up the hill and so out of sight, they crept over to a shoulder, from which they could plainly see the buffalo trail passing only forty yards distant. They had not sat there long when Hugh touched Jack, and motioned with his head, and, as he looked, Jack saw one buffalo after another come in sight around the point of the bluff until twelve were visible. "It's a little bunch of cows," said Hugh, in a low voice, "and five of 'em have got calves. There's two heifers, and one of those you want to kill. Take the last one, or else the one that's third from the end; they're the two heifers, and they'll be fat, and first-class meat. Take notice of these cows; you'll see their horns are slim and turned in. A bull's horns are a great deal stouter, and don't turn in near so much. Now, pick your animal, and get ready, and when she's opposite to us, shoot. Try not to kill one of the old cows; she won't be half as good meat as the heifer."

Jack lay there and watched, and his heart was beating fast, as the buffalo approached. They seemed to walk slowly and heavily, kicking up a good deal of dust, their beards almost sweeping the ground. The little calves, to Jack's great surprise, were reddish in colour, and seemed to have no hump at all. In fact, they looked like little red farm calves. They were

strong and active, and seemed to be very playful, sometimes running short races, away from the trail, and again coming back and falling into the line behind their mothers. Though to the eye the buffalo seemed ponderous and slow, it took them but a little time to get up opposite where Jack sat. When they had done so he settled himself and began to aim, and Hugh said, "Remember now, low down, and a leetle bit ahead of where you want to hit; they're moving, you know." Jack fired, and all the buffalo stopped and looked about them. "Did I hit her?" said Jack. "I think I must have."

"Yes," said Hugh, "you hit her, and you hit her right. She'll be down in a minute, and then I think the others will go on."

In a moment or two the heifer at which Jack had fired walked slowly out of the trail, and lay down, and the other buffalo, after looking about, started on, and in a few moments had disappeared behind another rise of ground.

"Well," said Hugh, "let's go and get the horses, I expect likely she'll be dead by the time we get to her." Jack was trembling a little when he rose and followed Hugh, but by the time he was in the saddle he had cooled down again. They rode toward the heifer, which had fallen over on her side and was moving still—not quite dead. Jack was about to ride up to her, when Hugh said, "Hold on! Wait a little; give her a chance to die." They dismounted at a little distance from the animal, and walked around to her head, but still fifteen or twenty yards distant.

"Now, I have often told you," said Hugh, "not to

"The other buffalo, after looking about, started on."—*Page* 102

go up to an animal without a load in your gun, and I'll tell you now, never to go up to a buffalo unless you're sure it's dead. I was hunting once with a partner, trying to get some meat to take into the railroad, and we shot three or four buffalo from a stand, and then went down and drove the others off, and started in to butcher. There was one cow that was moving a little, and my partner went up to her to cut her throat, and when he had nearly got to her, she jumped up and ran against him, and threw up her head, and then fell down dead, and when I got to him I found that one horn had split him open from the waist to the throat, and he died while I stood looking at him. That's always made me feel scared of a wounded buffalo. That cow keeps on moving. Just fire a shot into her head, just in front of the horns, and above the eyes." Jack did so, and the cow stretched out her legs and lay still. "Lots of people will tell you," said Hugh, "that you can't kill a buffalo by shooting it in the forehead. They say that the skull's so thick, and the hide and the hair makes such a mat that a ball won't go into it. Don't you ever believe them. If you shoot a buffalo in the forehead, and aim your gun right, so's to hit its brain, you kill it every time."

They took as much of the meat of the heifer as their horses could carry, and returned to camp.

CHAPTER XI.

IN THE QUICKSANDS.

"THERE," said Hugh, one afternoon as they rode over a low ridge, and down toward a stream flowing through a wide valley, "that's the Mussellshell!"

"Well," said Jack, "it don't look to me like much of a river."

"Well, no," said Hugh, "it ain't; there's a heap of valley and mighty little river. There ain't but one other river, that I know of, that's long like this one, that carries as little water."

"What one is that, Hugh?" said Jack.

"That's Milk River," was the reply. "We cross that, or at least, the heads of it after we get into the Piegan country. That stream don't rise in the mountains, but comes up out of a lot of springs and swamps on the prairie; so all the water it gets is what little melting snow drains into it in spring; and besides that, it flows through a gumbo country, and lots of the water soaks into the soil, so that by the middle of summer down near its mouth it is often plumb dry, or what water there is in it just stands in water holes; it don't run at all. Then, in spring, when the snow is melting and the rains are on, it often gets over its banks and floods the whole country."

"There don't seem to be much wood here, Hugh; where are you going to camp?"

"Well," said Hugh, "we'll have to camp by some patch of sage-brush, and use that and buffalo chips to cook with. There's plenty of wood up nearer to the mountains, but none down here."

Camp was made early in the afternoon, but after they had taken off the packs, and Jack had unsaddled, he noticed that Hugh's horse still had his saddle on, and was feeding about the camp, dragging his rope and bridle.

"Why don't you unsaddle, Hugh?" he asked.

"Well," said Hugh, "I'm going to ride along the river apiece, and try to pick a good place to cross; this here creek is mighty bad in spots—quicksands in the river and soap-holes along the bank, that you can't see until you get right to 'em. It may take me half an hour to look out a crossing to-night, and that may save us a horse, and anyhow, a whole lot of trouble in the morning."

After they had eaten and washed up the dishes, Hugh mounted and rode off up the stream. The horses were feeding close to the camp, and Jack took his rifle, and walking up to a little rise of ground, sat there, overlooking the camp and the wide valley. He had not been there very long when something moving down the stream caught his eye, and as he watched it, and it came nearer, he could see that it was a bird flying, and when still closer, he saw that the bird was big, and that there seemed to be something long streaming out behind it. Just below the camp it came down nearly to the water's surface, and suddenly threw

out a long neck, checked its flight, and let its long slender legs drop, alighting on a sand-bar. Jack saw then that it was a great heron or crane, but larger than any that he had ever seen. He thought he would shoot it, and get Hugh to tell him just what it was; so after the bird had stopped looking about, and had lowered its head and was walking along the bar, Jack quickly crept out of sight, and running down between two ridges which hid him, got near enough to the bank to take a shot at the bird. It was not easy to estimate how far off it was; it looked like less than a hundred yards, but over the flat bottom and the water there was nothing to measure the distance by except the bird's size. However, he took a careful shot at it with level sights, and was delighted to see it spread its wings and fall forward on the sand. He walked to the edge of the stream, wondering how he could get the bird. The distance across to the sand-bar was not great, but the water was muddy and whirling, and it was impossible to see bottom, or to guess whether if he stepped in he would go over his shoes or his head. He looked about for a stick with which he might feel for the bottom, but of course there were no sticks there. He put the butt of his gun into the water, but could not feel the bottom. Then he sat down, took off his shoes and stockings, and rolled up his trousers, and let himself down over the bank, feeling in the water for bottom, but he could not touch it. The water felt thick, and he could feel the little particles of soil striking against his legs. Getting up on the bank again he took his shoes in one hand and his rifle in the other, and walked up the

stream a little way, and there he again tried for bottom, but found none. He looked at the bird, so near to him, and did not feel like giving it up. It was hardly thirty feet away. He felt sure that he could throw a rope across to it.

This gave him an idea. Putting on his shoes, and thrusting his socks into his pocket, he walked up to the camp and took a sling-rope off a pack saddle, and then, with the axe and a picket-pin in his hand walked down to the stream. He now had in his mind two ways of getting the bird; one was to tie the picket-pin to the end of the rope, and try to throw it over the bird, and drag it into the water, and so, across. If he could not do that, he made up his mind that he would drive the picket-pin into the bank, tie the rope to it, strip off all his clothes, and, holding the rope, try to wade across the channel.

It was not hard to throw the picket-pin and rope over to where the bird lay, but it proved very hard to throw it so that the line could lie across the bird. Once he did so, and began to pull in very gradually, but before the bird had been moved at all toward the water's edge the pin slipped up over it and came away.

Meantime, Hugh had ridden quite a long way up the stream, looking for a crossing, but finding none. Two or three places seemed inviting, but his horse was afraid of them, and on investigating, Hugh found that bad quicksands lay close to the bank. At length, however, he reached a point where a deep buffalo trail came down to the water's edge, and where buffalo had crossed later. There were some stones in

the bottom here, and Hugh, riding in, and crossing the stream so as to come out where the buffalo trail appeared on the other side, found that he had a good crossing. Then he turned about and rode back to camp.

After Jack had thrown the picket-pin until he was thoroughly discouraged, he decided to try to cross, himself. He drove the picket-pin firmly in the bank, and tied the sling-rope to it, undressed, took the coil of rope in his hand, and then let himself down from the bank into the water, very slowly. Before the water was up to his shoulders his feet struck the bottom of coarse gravel, and he turned his face toward the other bank, and holding the rope tightly, with the coil in his left hand, he began to go slowly out into the stream. The water flowed with great violence, and two or three times nearly took him off his feet. Soon, however, it shoaled a little, and he turned up the stream to reach the point of the sand-bar behind which there was an eddy. In a moment the water was only up to his knees, and he was just about to spring forward to the bar when suddenly the bottom seemed to give out beneath his feet, and the water was up to his waist, while, piled around his legs, up to his knees, was a mass of heavy sand. He tried to lift his feet out of it, but the sand clung like great weights about his legs and he could not move them. In a moment it flashed across his mind that these must be the quicksands about which he had heard so often, but of which he had known nothing. Stories told by Hugh and others, of men and animals caught in this terrible, unyielding sand flashed across his mind as he

struggled to free his feet. One pull seemed to loosen his right foot, and he lifted it a little way, but this left him with his knee bent, and made that leg useless. The sand seemed to be piling up higher around his legs, and now it was half way up to his thighs. He was frightened.

All this had taken a very few moments and luckily he still held the sling-rope. He drew this tight, and throwing himself forward, so that his body was almost horizontal, he pulled on the rope with all his might, and at the same time tried to kick with his legs. In vain; he could move neither of them, but his thighs, which before had been erect, bent forward, and now he could not get them back again; to keep his body erect he was obliged to lean backward. Every minute he could feel that the sand was higher on his legs, and he could also feel that the water was creeping up his body. It seemed but a few moments since his knees were out of the water, and now the water rippled against his chest. What was going to happen? It could not be that he should drown here; and yet Hugh had told him of men who had been drowned in just this way. He must try again to get out. He must do something; he could not stand this.

Suddenly, he remembered something that Hugh was always saying; something that he had said to him only two or three days before; the sense of it was, that a man should always keep his wits about him; and as these oft repeated words came into his mind he seemed suddenly to cool off, and to lose the excitement that he had been feeling. His mind worked

fast, and he said to himself, "Now, what would Hugh do if he were stuck here?" He tried to think; then suddenly he bent down, and with his face close to the water began to scrap away the sands from the sides of his thighs. He had been doing that only for a moment when he noticed something; the sand scraped away on the down-stream side of his body seemed to come back at once; that scraped from the up-stream side did not come back, but left a hole. In a moment he comprehended what this meant; that on the up-stream side of his legs the water was helping carry away the disturbed sand, while on the down-stream side it was packing in that sand all the time. In a moment he was working with both hands on the up-stream leg, and it took a very short time to clear this almost down to the knee, but below that he could not get. Suddenly, he threw himself down stream as hard as he could, wrenched his body to one side, and with a mighty pull dragged his left leg from its fetter, falling down in the water so that its muddy flood covered him. He righted himself at once, and kept kicking with his left leg, for fear that it should again become fast, and soon he had trodden a hard place, where for a little while he could rest his foot, but the whirling sands soon covered it, and he was obliged to keep it moving. Now the water had carried away the sand from the upper part of his right thigh, but he could not free it, nor even move it. Again despair seized him, and he did not know what to do. He looked at the clear blue sky, at the brown prairie, and back at the horses, quietly feeding near the camp, just as if no one anywhere about was suf-

fering and fearing, perhaps dying. Oh, if Pawnee were only here, and he could take hold of his tail.

Once more he tried to free his foot, struggling, jerking, pulling and wrenching the leg, until it was strained and sore, but the unyielding sand held it as in a vise, and at length he stood still, almost exhausted. All the time he felt that the water was creeping up a little higher on his body. Now for a little while Jack entirely lost his self control. "What does it mean?" he asked himself in despair. "What is going to happen? Can it be that I am not going to get out? Have I got to drown here in sight of camp? Shan't I ever get back home, and see father and mother again, or uncle Will or Hugh? Was mother thinking about this when she cried and kissed me at the train, and asked me to be careful? I haven't been careful, but it seems kind o' hard that she should have to suffer because I am a fool. How badly father'll feel, too, and Uncle Will and Hugh. They'll all think that they were to blame. Oh! I must get out, I can't die here;" and the poor boy again struggled until he was exhausted. The water was now nearly up to his armpits, and he was almost worn out.

All at once, as he looked at the camp, he saw Hugh ride in among the horses, stop and look about, as if trying to see where his companion was. Jack's heart gave a great bound, and he called loudly, but Hugh did not hear him, and began to swing himself out of the saddle. In despair, Jack yelled again, sending out a shrill, high-pitched scream which reached the rider and made him throw his leg back over the saddle and turn in the direction of the river. Again

Jack screamed, and Hugh galloped rapidly toward the bank, and in a moment saw the boy's white skin shining above the muddy water.

"Help, Hugh! help! I'm stuck," called Jack.

"All right, son," came Hugh's deep voice, "hold on a minute, we'll have you out." He galloped up to the very edge of the bank, sprang from the saddle, and quickly freed his rope from the horse's neck, at the same time throwing down the bridle rein. Then stepping a little to one side; he coiled the rope, made a careful cast, and the loop fell over Jack's head. Jack caught it, drew up the loop under his arm-pits, and Hugh quickly took in the slack; then he walked to his horse, drew the rope tight, and took a double turn of it about the saddle horn.

"Now, son," said Hugh, "we've got to pull you out, and if you're badly stuck, it's liable to stretch you considerable."

"No matter, Hugh; only get me out as quick as you can," said Jack. "I've got one leg free, there's only one to be pulled loose."

"Well," said Hugh, "we'll go as easy as we can, but it's liable to hurt you considerable. What's this rope running into the water from this pin?"

"That's around my body, too," said Jack.

"Is it tied?" said Hugh.

"No," said Jack, "it's just wrapped around."

"Well, make it fast around your body, and then let me have what slack you can. I'll pull on that rope, and have the horse pull on the other, and maybe that'll make it easier for you."

Jack tied the end of the rope about his body, and

Hugh took in the slack; then he loosened the lariat, turned his horse so that his head was away from the stream, again fastened the lariat to the saddle horn, and put the sling-rope over his own shoulder; then he called to Jack, "See if you can dig away the sand at all from around the leg that's fast." Jack bent down until his face was under water, and worked hard, scraping away the sand, and again succeeded in getting it down to his knee; then he raised his head again, and called to Hugh, "I've done the best I can, the sand is down to my knee, but it's filling up again."

"Well," said Hugh, "we'll start. You must yell if you feel anything breaking." He bent forward, throwing his weight very slowly against the sling rope, and starting the horse very slowly at the same time. The ropes tightened, Jack was pulled forward until his face was under water, he felt as if he were being cut in two below his arms, as if his legs were being pulled out of their sockets, when suddenly, with a jerk, he flew forward, was buried under the muddy water, and then whirled over and over in it, and a moment later was dragged out on the bank by Hugh, who bent over him with an anxious face. Without a word Hugh lifted him in his arms and put him on the horse, which he led toward the camp. Before they had reached there, Jack had recovered his breath, and said, "Oh, Hugh, I don't think I ever was so glad to see anybody in my life as I was to see you ride in among the horses."

"Well," said Hugh, "I'm glad I got there just when I did. You must have had a pretty bad time while you were stuck there."

"Yes," said Jack, "I don't think I will ever be so near drowning, and yet live."

"You're some cut by them ropes, I see," said Hugh. And Jack, looking down, saw about his body two red, bleeding marks, where the ropes had rubbed his skin off. "Are your legs all right?" continued the old man.

"I think so," said Jack. "One of 'em feels longer than the other, but I can move them both."

"Well," said Hugh, "I ought to have told you not to try to cross this creek; everybody knows it's bad for quicksands, but I ought to have remembered that you didn't know nothing about this country, anyhow."

Hugh lifted Jack out of the saddle and laid him down on one of the mantas, and then unrolled his bed and put him on that.

"Now," said Hugh, "I'm going to look you over and see if you're much hurted." A quick, rough examination showed Hugh that, except for marks around Jack's body where the ropes had pulled, and a long, deep scratch on his leg and foot, he was quite sound. Hugh took some sheep tallow, and melting it in the frying-pan, applied it warm to these scars; and then, telling Jack to lie still, went down to the stream again and brought back his rifle and clothes. Then he sat by him and talked to him, telling stories of the Musselshell country, and the Indian fights that had taken place there, until darkness fell, and the boy dropped asleep.

CHAPTER XII.

RESTING UP.

WHEN Jack awoke next morning and tried to move he was unable to do so. For a moment he could not think what had happened; then suddenly the events of the day before flashed back into his memory. Hugh, who had been sitting by the fire, saw the blankets stir and walked over near to him.

"Well, son," he said, "how do you feel this morning? Pretty stiff and sore I reckon, ain't you?"

"Yes, indeed, Hugh, I am sore all over. I don't feel as if I could move; but except for that I am all right."

"Well," said Hugh, "lie still awhile till I make breakfast, and then we'll kind o' prop you up, and see whether you are off your feed or not."

Hugh went back to the fire and Jack could hear him walking about it and rattling the dishes. He wanted to get up and do his part, too, but he could not bend one of his joints without its hurting. By-and-by he managed very slowly to turn his whole body, so that he lay on his side and could look at the fire, and watch Hugh cooking the meat and waiting for the coffee to boil, and then taking the pot off the coals and setting it in a warm place, and finally clearing it by dashing a cupful of water into it. Then, when all was ready,

Hugh brought the pack saddles close to Jack's bed, piled them up firmly so as to make a back, and then approaching Jack, put his arm under his shoulders, lifted him partly from the ground, and drew the whole bed over until the boy's back rested against the pack saddles, made soft by the piling against them of a number of blankets. Hugh did this so very slowly and gently that the bending of Jack's body at the thighs scarcely hurt him at all.

"There," said Hugh, "did it hurt you much? I reckon you'll feel better right off, now that you can sit up and look around; and now if you'll eat a good breakfast I think I can take and rub some of the soreness out of you pretty quick, as soon as it gets a little warmer."

"Thank you, Hugh," said Jack, gratefully, "it didn't hurt me a bit, and I believe if you'll help me a little bit I can get up and dress and walk around, after breakfast. I hate to lie here doing nothing, It's like being a prisoner."

"Well," said Hugh, "it ain't no fun, I reckon. I mind once when I was laid up with a broken leg, I got terrible uneasy until I was able to hobble about a little bit, and I know that being a prisoner ain't no fun, cause I was one myself once, and I was sure uncomfortable."

"When was that, Hugh?" said Jack. "I never heard about that before."

"Well," said Hugh, "you go on and eat your breakfast here's your coffee and some meat and bread, and I'll tell you about it. It wan't so very long ago; only about ten years. I was working on a ranch at the

head of one of the forks of the Loup, just after they first got cattle in the country, and we had a terrible lot of trouble with horse thieves. Doc Middleton and his gang was camped somewhere in the country, and some of the best horses out on the range kept disappearing all the time. We knew it wasn't Indians that was taking them, and we knew they wasn't running off themselves; so we calculated it was white men, and we figured that it was Middleton and his outfit. Still, there wasn't anything sure known about it. Some of the boys were for catching Middleton and hanging him, but it was easier to talk about that than it was to do it. He generally went with three or four men, not always the same ones though, and they were all of them always heeled, and it was liable to be a pretty hard matter to get the drop on them. Nobody knew where they was camped, but the boys that was riding on all the ranches in the country had orders to be on the lookout for them, and if they saw any signs of where they stopped, to let it be known right off.

"Finally one day one of the boys came in and reported that he'd come on a horse trail pretty well worn, leading down into one of the cedar canyons that runs into the Dismal, and he believed that Middleton's outfit was camped in there; and from the way the trail looked, he thought they had a lot of horses there. It didn't take long to gather up a dozen men, who said they'd start down there and find out what there was in the camp, anyhow; and other riders had been sent out to bring in more men from the furthest camps. Really, a dozen men wasn't enough to tackle this gang, for we could count eight or nine men that belonged to

it, and if they wanted to put up a fight against us it wasn't any sure thing that we could best them. Anyhow, what there was of us started out about dark and rode down within two or three miles of the cedar canyon, leaving fellows along the road to bring up any of the other men that might come in. When we got down to the stopping place, Wilson, the ranch boss who was leading our party, asked me to go ahead down to the camp and see how many men there was there, and whether they had just their own horses, or a bunch besides.

"I started off, and when I got within a quarter of a mile of the camp, left my horse in the hollow in the sandhills, and went ahead on foot. It was easy to find the place. When I got close to it, I could see the light of the fire shine on the cedars long before I got within sight of the camp. I went along slow and easy, but when I got to the edge of the canyon I could not see anything except the fire and two or three wagons, and five or six men sitting around. Their horses were out of sight somewhere. I slipped down a side ravine, and keeping pretty well at the edge of the canyon, worked my way along until I got up above the men. I soon saw that there'd been quite a bunch of horses pastured there, and going along a little further found thirty or forty head feeding in the canyon. I went pretty careful, because I didn't know but I might run onto a horse guard any minute, for it didn't seem likely that these horses would stay down in the canyon there unless they was herded. They'd be more likely to get up onto the prairie where the grass was better.

"After I had seen the horses I went on back till I got

nearly opposite where the fire was, and then I crept up on a little ridge of sand and looked over to count the men and see what they was doing, and how they was fixed. I lay there, I guess, fifteen or twenty minutes, trying to take the whole thing in, and then suddenly I heard a little rustle in the grass near me, and as I drew back out of sight, a couple of men landed on my back and yelled plenty for help. One of them was smart enough to grab my gun and throw it away, and we just scuffled around in the sand there for half a minute or two, and then the whole bunch that had been at the fire jumped on me, and I give up.

"They hauled me over to the fire, and stood around looking at me and calling me names, and presently Doc Middleton says, says he: 'Why, I know that old fool; he works over to Wilson's ranch. What were you doing,' says he, mighty mad, 'spying around this here camp? For two cents I'd blow you full of holes;' and he pulled out a six-shooter and stuck it in my face. I was some uneasy, because I knew they was a bad lot, and they was liable to kill me right there, and hide me in the sandhills, and then skin out of the country; but the fact is they'd been there so long without being bothered that I expect Doc thought he owned the country. And at last after a whole heap of talk they tied me up to a wagon wheel close to the fire, and Doc told two of the men to sit by me and watch me all night, and to kill me if I moved.

"I sat there most of the night. The two fellows that was guarding me spelled each other; one would

sleep for an hour, and then the other would wake him and give him the watch, and then he'd sleep; and pretty soon they both went to sleep.

"Whenever I got a chance I worked some at the ropes, mainly those on my hands, and at last I got 'em free, and then I loosened the rope around my body; but I still sat there for I wanted both them fellows to get good and sound asleep before I commenced to sneak. By this time the fire had died down, so that it didn't give no light to amount to nothing. I'd just cast off the ropes and worked myself around behind the wagon, mighty slow, and was beginning to crawl off, when all of a sudden I heard horses coming, and the first I knew, the camp was surrounded. Doc and his gang didn't make no fight at all; they was too surprised. They was all of 'em brought up to the fire and tied up there, same as I'd been a little while before. Of course, as soon as the fellows came into the camp I holloard, because I didn't want 'em to be shooting at me. By the time the camp was captured it began to get light. Doc sat there by the fire and talked, and told Wilson what an outrage it was that a band of robbers should attack a lot of peaceable cow-punchers the way they had them. He swore he'd have the law on 'em just as soon as he could get to the Platte; but Wilson told him that he was liable never to get nearer to the Platte than the branches of one of them cedar trees up on the bluff.

"I told Wilson the way they'd mistreated me, and told him about the horses up the canyon. They was fetched down; they had all sorts of brands on 'em, but not one that belonged in the country. It was always

my belief that them fellows stole our horses and sent them down into Colorado, trading 'em off, maybe, for horses that they had stolen down there. Anyhow, there wasn't a particle of evidence in the camp that we could find that justified hanging one of them men.

"Wilson gave Doc and his men a good talking to, and told them they'd have to leave the country. He gave 'em three weeks to get out, and then told them that if they was found there after that, they'd be killed. Well, they left within the time set, and that part of the country hasn't never been troubled with 'em since, though I have heard of Doc in a good many places since, and always with a pretty tough name."

Jack had long ago finished his breakfast, and the sun was now high in the heavens and beginning to beat down with fervor on the barren, yellow plain After Hugh had washed the dishes, he said to Jack:—

"Now, I'll tell you what I want to do, son; I want to give you a good rubbing all over, to take the soreness out of you. After I have done that you'd better lie down and go to sleep again, and then toward evening maybe you can put on your clothes and walk around a bit, and to-morrow, if you feel all right, we'll start on again. I've found a good crossing up above here, and just as soon as you are able to travel we'll roll out." Accordingly, Hugh gave Jack a hard rubbing from head to foot, anointing the chafed and scratched parts of his body with sheep tallow, to which he added the crushed leaves and stems of a certain plant which he solemnly told Jack was his medicine, rolled Jack up in a blanket and left him to sleep. When the boy awoke again he felt fresh, and could

move his arms and legs without much pain. Hugh helped him dress, and they walked a little distance up and down the river from camp; and after supper that night Jack said he certainly felt well enough to go on in the morning.

CHAPTER XIII.

TO FORT BENTON AND BEYOND.

JACK was at first pretty stiff and sore when he arose next day, but as he moved about the camp, engaged in the work of helping to get breakfast and preparing to pack up, his stiffness wore off. He told Hugh that he felt able to ride, and Hugh replied that it would be better for him to be travelling than to lie in camp.

Accordingly, soon after sunrise the little train moved off up the river, crossed without incident at the ford that Hugh had found two days before, and started across the valley. Following up a little tributary that flowed in from the north, they journeyed onward, seeing all through the morning numbers of antelope which astonished even Hugh. They were chiefly bucks, in considerable bands, and entirely fearless, as if they had not been disturbed for a long time. Sometimes a band would start from below them on the hillside, gallop out into the creek bottom, and then turning parallel with the pack train would slowly gallop along not more than forty or fifty yards distant, occasionally stopping and staring, and then starting on again. Hugh declared that at this season of the year he had never seen antelope in such large bunches and said that he did not understand it.

Their camp that night was on a little spring at the head of the small creek that they had been following up, and high hills, almost mountains, rose to the north of them. It seemed to be a country abounding in game, for at night when Jack rode out to round up the horses—since it was thought best now for a little while to picket most of them—he started from the underbrush about the camp no less than seven deer, and none of them seemed especially frightened but trotted off and stood looking at him as he gathered up his animals. After darkness had fallen and they were sitting about the fire, Hugh smoking a last pipe before going to bed, Jack said:—

"What does it mean, Hugh, our seeing so much game here? We haven't seen antelope or deer either as plenty since we have been out as to-day."

"Well," said Hugh, "I don't know as I can tell you, but it appears to me that the Indians haven't been in this country for quite a while, and it's a sure thing no white men have. The only people that travel around here are skin hunters, and when they're in the country we don't find the game tame like it is here. There's lots of buffalo been here too, as you can see, but I ain't seen any right fresh signs for two or three days. Likely we'll run on some though any time. We don't want to kill nothing, though, while we've got any of this meat left."

"No," said Jack, "there'd be no sense in shooting these animals down just to let 'em lie there. It's lots more fun to watch 'em when they're right tame this way than it is to kill 'em."

"That's so," said Hugh; "but most people don't

think that way. I wish more of 'em did. Most men when they see anything that's alive they want to kill it, and they want to keep killing as long as there's anything around that moves."

The next day the two passed over a low divide between high hills, and soon came upon water running to the north. Hugh told Jack that this was a branch of the Judith River, that runs into the Missouri from the south. "I don't know," he said, "whether you'd call this the main creek or not; it's lots longer than the other fork that rises in the Judith Mountains, but it don't carry near so much water. The big creek is what we call Big Spring Creek; it flows a heap of water, and mighty nice water too, and the stream is full of trout." As they were passing down the stream Jack suddenly saw Hugh draw in his horse and look long and intently down the valley; then he went on again, and as Jack passed over the ridge he saw half a mile ahead what looked like the poles of two lodges, as Hugh had described them, but they were not lodges for they were not covered. When they had reached these poles they saw that they were two large tripods about twenty feet in height, and from the legs of these tripods were hanging hundreds of moccasins. Some were plain and some beautifully ornamented with beads or with porcupine quills; but the curious thing about them was that they were all made for little feet; in other words they were children's moccasins. Hugh and Jack both dismounted and walked around the tripods, looking at them carefully. Most of the moccasins were about three inches long, and none seemed more than five inches.

"What are these put here for, Hugh?" said Jack.

"Blest if I know," said Hugh. "It's some offering; likely a present to the sun; but why they're all children's moccasins beats me. I expect they're put up here by the Crows, likely; but it might be the Gros Ventres. You see, we're in a kind of a No-man's-land, here. All the Indians pass through on their way to the fort to trade, and yet none of 'em has any rights here."

For several days after this they travelled over the prairie but were constantly in sight of mountains which rose like great islands from the rolling plain. Now they saw buffalo again, and once on crossing a wooded stream valley they started a little band of cow elk with their calves, which trotted swiftly away toward the mountains without being shot at. One night Hugh said to Jack:—

"I expect, son, to-morrow we'll camp with some people that'll surprise you; you'll think they're curious when you look at 'em."

"Why who are those, Hugh? I didn't know you expected to get into any Indian camp now."

"Well no," said Hugh, "I ain't said much about it, but if I ain't mightily out in my calculations we'll strike a big camp to-morrow. More than that, you'll think the people that you meet pretty civilized. They don't live in lodges, and they wear shoes, and some of 'em have got just as good guns as you or me."

"Why, who can they be, Hugh; the Red River half-breeds that I have heard you talk about? I'd like to see their camp."

"No," said Hugh; "to-morrow I expect we'll strike Fort Benton. Have you ever heard of that place?"

"Why yes," said Jack, "of course I have, but I didn't know we were going to pass through it. Oh, that's what you meant by their not living in lodges, is it? How much of a place is Fort Benton?"

"Well," said Hugh, "I don't rightly know how many people live there, but I expect it must be nigh onto a thousand. You take it when the furs and the robes are coming in in the fall and Benton's a mighty lively place. It's the furthest point up the river, you know, where the steam-boats can come, and all the robes are brought in there and taken down by the steam-boats now. In old times they used to go down in flat boats, batteaux we used to call 'em. The river must be full now, and likely we'll see two or three steam-boats tied up there, from down below, loading with furs. You see, they bring up grub and trade goods, and then load up with robes and go on down again.

"I don't want to stop there long; just over night, maybe; but likely we'll find some Piegans in there, and if we do, they can tell us where the camp is. I'd like to have you see the old 'dobe Fort that's there, the first trading post built on the river up here."

"My!" said Jack, "I'd like to see that. Then besides that, Hugh, there must be lots of old mountain men at Benton, ain't there? I should think they'd have interesting stories to tell of the old times."

"Well," said Hugh, "I expect there is quite a few in there, but I've noticed that a good many of these old timers don't seem to have much to tell that's very

interesting; the main things that they remember are about some time when they came with a big load of furs and sold them at a big price, and then had a terrible fine drunk with the money. I don't guess most of the stories they'd tell would interest you very much. Still, might be such a thing as we'd run across somebody that could give you a talk that was interesting and true, but I don't look for it."

The next afternoon, shortly before sundown, Hugh and Jack rode into the streets of Ft. Benton, and halting before a great log store and warehouse, Hugh dismounted and went in. In a few moments he came out again and riding a short distance down the wide street, turned in to a large building which bore over the door a sign "Stable." Here they unpacked, piled their possessions in a corner, turned out their animals into a corral, and gave them feed and hay, and then Jack and Hugh started out to explore the town.

"I reckon we'll sleep in the stable to-night, and make an early start in the morning. The folks in the store where I stopped told me that there's quite a lot of Piegans in town, and if we can see them we'll find out which way to go to-morrow. Now let's go down to the river and see the old fort."

It did not seem to Jack as if very much of the fort was left, though the tumbled-down walls and one of the old bastions, washed and guttered by the rains of many years, still stood upright in part. To any one interested in the old West or the fur trade, the ground on which Jack stood was historic, and he made up his mind that as soon as he got back east he would find out from the books all that he could about Fort Benton.

Hugh could not tell him very much; he thought it was built about 1848 or '49, or maybe earlier, and he knew that it was the place where the Indians used to trade in the old days.

Sauntering along the high bank of the river, toward the edge of the settlement, Hugh's eye at length detected three or four buffalo-skin lodges standing among the sage-brush near the water. They walked over to them and soon saw that they were in an Indian camp, and after a moment's hesitation, Hugh addressed a naked man who was lying in the shade, speaking to him in his own tongue. A sentence or two seemed to galvanize the man, who sprang to his feet and shook Hugh's hand heartily, talking volubly in his own tongue. After a brief conversation Hugh turned to Jack and said:—

"They say the main camp is over on the St. Mary's River, quite a long way from here, and I expect we'll have to go over there to join them. Old Four Bears, here, says he is going back in three or four days, and wants us to wait for him, but I reckon we'll start on to-morrow morning, and get there as quick as we can. An Indian's three or four days is likely to spin out pretty long."

That night, for the first time in weeks, Jack and Hugh ate their supper sitting in chairs at a table in the Fort Benton hotel. They slept that night in the stable, and the next morning replenished their stock of flour, coffee and other provisions, and immediately started northwest in search of the Piegan camp. For several days they travelled northward over the rolling prairie, without adventure. Buffalo were often in

sight, antelope were abundant, and sometimes on crossing important streams like the Teton, Birch Creek and Badger Creek, they started deer from the willows along the stream. Several times they came upon small camps of Indians, and Hugh usually stopped to inquire of these small parties where the main camp was. All the people whom he spoke with agreed that it was on the St. Mary's River, and all said that they were about to start north to join it.

Soon after they had left Fort Benton, the great mountains to the westward had begun to be seen, and as they travelled northward they seemed to draw nearer and nearer, until now always on their left this great wall rose up, high, jagged and snow-covered far down towards its base.

One day they made a long march, and toward night camped on the shores of a little prairie lake, on the surface of which many water birds were swimming. After they had made camp, Jack went down to the lake to get a bucket of water. As he stooped to fill his bucket he noticed off to the left a deep bay in which a number of large birds were swimming. The entrance to this bay was narrow, and the birds were near its head, so that it seemed to him that by going to its mouth he could cut them off and keep them from getting out into the main lake. He left his pail standing on the shore, and running to the mouth of the bay found the water there very shoal. The birds which were at the upper end of the bay seemed frightened but made no attempt to fly, though flapping clumsily along on the water away from him. He could now see that they were geese, and as he

thought, young ones. He waded into the water which, at the middle of the mouth, was not more than up to his knees, and began to walk toward the geese, and presently these walked up out of the water onto the prairie and hid themselves in the long grass. Going slowly toward them, Jack followed them out of the water and presently saw one crouched on the ground, its head thrust in among the grass. He caught it and, lifting it up, found that it was a goose, nearly, or quite full grown, but as yet unable to fly, for the quill feathers of its wings were soft and bent easily. These he thought would be pretty good eating, and looking about a little he found two more in the grass, and killing the three, went back to his water bucket, filled that and took it up to camp.

"Well," said Hugh, "I was beginning to wonder what had got you. Where did you get them birds?"

"Why," said Jack, "I got 'em in the grass down there by the lake, and I thought they'd be pretty good eating, so I brought 'em along."

"That's good," said Hugh; "they'll do right well for breakfast. I expect you're getting a little tired of that dried meat, and I don't know but I'm ready for a little fresh meat myself. Better put 'em down there by the saddles, and as soon as we've eaten supper we'll go out to leeward of the camp and pick 'em." While they were doing this, Hugh said to Jack:—

"It ain't but a short day's march now to where the camp ought to be, if it ain't moved; and if it's moved it'll be easy to follow the trail. We're bound to catch

up to 'em now in the course of two or three days, anyhow."

"That'll be good, Hugh," said Jack; "I want to get into the camp; that's what we've been thinking about now for a good many days, and I'm glad it's so near to us."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PIEGAN CAMP.

"THERE'S the camp," said Hugh, half turning in his saddle, as he drew up his horse on top of the hill. Jack turned Pawnee out of the trail, and trotted by the pack horses, and when he reached Hugh's side, he looked down on the first Indian camp he had ever seen. At the foot of the long hill before them flowed a broad river, and on the wide flat beyond it stood a great circle of lodges, stretching up and down the stream, and reaching almost over to the farther bluffs.

"It's a big camp," said Hugh; "all the Piegans must be there."

"Why, Hugh," said Jack, "there must be an awful lot of people in all those tents."

"Yes," said Hugh, "there's quite a lot of 'em, and I expect, from the way the camp looks, that maybe there's more than just the Piegans. There must be some Bloods and Blackfeet with them. Now you can see what a camp really looks like. It's only once in a while that the people all get together like this. I expect maybe they're getting ready to hold the medicine lodge; that'll come right soon now; about the time that the berries are ripe. That's the biggest time these people have, and I expect if we're here

when they hold it this year, you'll like it. There ain't many white people has ever seen a Blackfoot medicine lodge, and if you see one you'll be in big luck."

"I hope I will," said Jack. "I don't know what it is, but I want to find out everything about how these people live, and I want to try to remember everything that I see. Now, most of the lodges stand in a circle, but there are some of them inside the circle; what does that mean, Hugh? What are those for?"

"Well, you see that big lodge nearly in the middle of the circle?" said Hugh; "that's the head chief's lodge. He stops there. And then those two smaller ones on either side of it, pretty well over toward the other lodges, they belong to the secret societies, that they call, 'All Friends.'"

"Secret societies! You must be joking, Hugh; they don't have secret societies among the Indians, do they?"

"They surely do," answered Hugh. "There's about a dozen or fifteen societies of men. A man starts in when he's only a boy, not much bigger than you are, and he keeps going along from one society to another, until he gets to be a middle-aged man; until he begins to be old. The men that are warriors, going to war all the time—young fellows with lots of ambition—they mostly belong to what they call the brave society; Mŭt'siks, they call it. You'll hear all about them societies if you stop long in the camp; but the brave society is about the most important; and that, and two or three of the others, are what we call the 'soldier bands'; they're kind o' like constables. If the chiefs order anything done, and the

people don't do it, they tell some of these bands of the 'All Friends' to make 'em do it, and they just have to. Sometimes, if a man's right stubborn, the soldiers'll quirt him, or they'll break his lodge poles, or cut his lodge to pieces, or even kill his horses. Most folks think that each Indian does what he likes; but you can bet it ain't so. And if you'll just think about it a little bit, you'll see it couldn't be so. These people have got to live together, and they couldn't live together comfortably if every man was doing just what he wanted to, and didn't pay no attention to what was good for other people. Now suppose there was a bunch of buffalo close to the camp, and a man found 'em, and started in to run 'em, and kill a lot of meat for himself; he might scare the buffalo, and run 'em all out of the country, so that the other people in the camp couldn't get any for themselves. That is just one way where one man might do a whole lot of harm to everybody in the camp. These people have laws, just like white folks do, and they have to obey the laws too, you bet. Well, let's go on down to the camp. You start them pack horses ahead, and we'll go down to the ford; it runs kind of slanting, and we've got to stick to the bar, without we want to swim."

"Hold on a minute, Hugh," said Jack; "what are those things there, that those horses are dragging?" Several riders had just appeared around a point of the bluffs, close to the river bank, and were entering the water to cross to the camp. Behind each horse followed a pile of wood, supported on two sticks which the animal was dragging. Almost every horse bore a

rider. "Why," said Hugh, "that's a lot of women coming in with their wood. Don't you see each horse is dragging a travois, with a load of sticks and brush on it?"

"Oh, are those travois? I want to see how they're fixed on the horses. They are a good deal like our wagons, aren't they? Only they haven't any wheels," said Jack.

"Yes," said Hugh, "that's the Indians' cart. There, you see the way that first woman is pointing? You see, she doesn't go straight across the river; she goes slantways down the stream. There's a big bar runs across there, where the water isn't much more than up to a horse's belly; the bar's narrow, and on either side, it's swimming water; so when you cross here, you have to stick to that gravel bar."

By this time all the women had ridden into the water, and were crossing. Hugh started down the hill toward the point where they had entered the stream, and Jack drove the pack horses close after him. When they were part way down the hill, two more women made their appearance, and riding down the narrow ravine, along which the trail ran, entered the water. Hugh and Jack were not far behind them, and saw them stop a little way from the bank, to let their horses drink. They were near enough to see that the first one was a middle-aged woman, and the last, who was nearer to them, was a young girl.

Just before Jack and Hugh reached the water's edge, they heard behind them the thunder of many hoofs, and suddenly—driven by two Indian boys—there poured over the bank, almost on top of them, a

great band of horses, rushing forward at top speed, the younger ones bounding and plunging, with heads and tails in the air, nipping at each other, and lashing out with their heels in play. The leading horses, when they saw the men and the pack train, tried to stop, but they were pushed forward by the throng behind, and obliged to keep on, but the herd separated, and rushed down to the ford on either side of Jack, whose pack horses, tired as they were, threw up their heads and seemed to want to join in the race. The band of horses came together again, just in front of Hugh, and streamed down the trail into the water, and along the bar. The leading ones galloped on across, toward the older woman, who, Jack saw, was screaming and motioning with her hands. This stopped the horses in front, but not those behind, which continued to rush into the river, crowding and pushing, at first against each other, and soon against the horse ridden by the girl. She was striking at them with her quirt, but they could not get away from her, on account of those that followed, and in a moment Jack saw them crowd against the horse on which the girl sat, which was being pushed into deeper and deeper water.

It was exciting to watch, and Jack felt afraid that the girl might be knocked off into deep water and drowned. Without thinking of his pack horses, he galloped to the water's edge. The loose horses immediately in front of him started again, and then the whole bunch made a rush for the other bank. There was a confused struggle, and, to his dismay, he saw the old travois horse run against by some of the other horses, and knocked down into the deep water,

and the girl and travois horse both disappeared. He heard Hugh call to him, "Ride in and swim for her!" and closing his legs about Pawnee, he galloped him through the shallow water, and in a moment the good horse was swimming over where the girl had disappeared. Jack saw the old horse, still followed by its load of wood, striking out bravely for the other bank, but where was the girl? In a moment he caught a gleam of something white in the water, and almost at the same instant her struggling form appeared. She was just ahead of Pawnee, and a light pressure on the right hand rein, turned the horse so that he swam close beside her, and Jack, reaching over, caught her by the shoulder of her buckskin dress, and pulled her toward him.

As soon as her head was above water she reached out and grasped the horn of his saddle, and then, after resting a moment, drew herself close to the horse, and, helped by Jack, clambered up behind him. By the time she was seated, they were half way across the river, and now Jack did not know whether to guide his horse toward the other bank, or to swim back to the bar. The double weight made Pawnee swim low in the water, but his head was stretched out, his nostrils were well above the surface, and he struck out strongly—as Hugh said afterwards—"like a loon chasing shiners." The question as to which way he should go was soon decided, for in a moment or two the horse's hoofs touched bottom, and he climbed up the rapidly shoaling side of the bar.

During all this time Jack had not looked about him very much; he had been thinking how he should get

hold of the girl, and then, how he should get to shore. If he had looked, he would have seen the girl's mother sitting on her horse, near the bank where the camp stood, scanning the water just ahead of him, and twisting her hands, but uttering no word. He would have seen Hugh gallop into the water, followed by the pack horses, and ride off the bar, not very far behind him, and then, when Jack got the girl, ride back to the bar and go on toward the other shore.

Now, when Jack was on the bar once more, he saw just before him, the old woman sitting looking at him, and, hearing a splashing in the water behind, he looked around and saw Hugh following.

"Is the girl hurt?" called Hugh.

"I don't know," answered Jack, "I didn't think to ask her. Are you hurt, little girl?" he added, twisting in his saddle, so that he could look into her face. As he did so he saw that blood was trickling down over her forehead. She did not answer him, but shook her head.

In a moment more he stopped by the woman, who reached out her hand and took hold of the girl's arm, and spoke to her; but of course Jack did not understand what she said, though he felt that the girl shook her head. Then Hugh, who had come up, spoke to the woman in the Indian tongue. She replied, and after a moment's conversation, Hugh said to Jack, "Ride after the old woman, son; we will camp at her lodge to-night. I know her husband right well; he is a relation of old John Monroe's. You're in pretty good luck that you fished that girl out of the river the way you did. You'll surely be thought a heap of in

this camp. She's Little Plume's daughter. He's an awful good man, a great warrior and a chief, and there won't be anything too good for you in this camp as long as you're here. I expect the little girl hurt her head when she rolled off that horse, but I reckon it ain't nothing but a little cut." He spoke to the girl, who did not answer him, but her mother spoke for her and Hugh said, "No, she ain't hurt a mite." By this time they had ridden up on the bank, and were entering the circle of the camp. Jack looked about him with the greatest interest, and forgot that he was wet, cold and shivering.

The lodges were great broad cones, and each one ended above in a sheaf of crossing lodge poles. Beneath where the lodge poles crossed, on one side, there was a dark opening from which smoke poured out, and on either side of this opening, stretched out a sort of three-cornered sail or wing. Near the ground, the skins, which covered the lodges were yellow or gray, but toward the top they grew darker, and some of them were dark brown. Some of the lodges had great patches on them, as if they had been mended. Some were ornamented with curious figures. Over the door of one was painted the black head of a buffalo cow. On another there was the figure of an elk. About yet another was a broad band of red, on which a procession of black birds seemed to be marching round the lodge. From the points of the wings of many lodges, hung buffalo tails, and sometimes great bunches of this black hair ran down from the smoke hole to the door. Scattered about through the camp were many people, busy

about many different tasks. Groups of men smoked together. Women were busy hammering on stones. Here and there men sat by themselves, working with knives or other tools, at sticks of different sorts. On the ground were hides, over which women were bending.

All these things Jack saw, but did not very well comprehend. Meantime they had crossed the circle and approached a large lodge, near which two women were busy, with whom were two or three little children, and by the lodge stood an old horse with a travois, on which there was a load of wet and dripping wood. The woman Jack was following called in shrill tones to the others, and as Jack stopped, they hurried up to him, lifted the girl from his horse, and took her into the lodge. The woman motioned for him to dismount, and at the same moment the pack horses came up, driven by Hugh.

Jack was glad to get his feet on the ground once more, and to stamp about a little to get warm. Hugh said to him, "Go inside, if you like, son, and get close to the fire; you must be cold."

"No," said Jack, "I'll help you unpack first. I'll get warm sooner if I'm working."

"I believe you will," said Hugh; "that's pretty good sense. It won't take us long to get these packs off." Nor did it. In a very few minutes the horses' loads were piled up outside the lodge door, the pack horses turned loose, and the saddle horses tied to pins driven in the ground near the lodge. Then Hugh and Jack went inside.

There was a bright, warm fire there, evidently just

built up, and Jack, who in entering had hit his head against the top of the doorway, was about to step up to it and warm his hands, when Hugh laid his hand on his shoulder and guided him to the right as they went in, and pressed him to the ground, and both sat down near the door. The woman spoke up quickly, in a voice as if she were finding fault, and motioned toward the back of the lodge, and Hugh rose and led Jack around, almost opposite the door, where they again sat down. "Now, son," said Hugh, "take off your shoes and all your outside things, and try to get dry. After we've set here a minute or two, maybe I'll go out and open one of the packs, and see if I can get you some dry clothes." He spoke to the woman for a moment, and then turning to Jack, said, "She says she wants us to stop here until her husband gets back. He and John Monroe went off early this morning, up the creek, to try to get some deer skins. Pretty soon now they'll be back. She says that even if you do go to stop with John Monroe, she wants you to sleep to-night in this lodge, so that her husband can see you and talk to you. She says he will not forget that you pulled his little girl out of the water. She thinks you are a good boy. You acted quick. When you grow up you will be a good man and brave. If you go to war you will have good luck."

Jack felt rather embarrassed. "Do you mean to say that she said all those things about me?" he asked.

"Yes," said Hugh, "that's just what she said."

"Well," said Jack, "of course I'm awful glad I

pulled the little girl out of the water, but anybody else would have done it just the same, and if I hadn't, why you were right there and would have done it, I expect, a good deal quicker than I did."

"Well," said Hugh, "maybe I might, but you're the one that did it, that makes the difference, and I expect that woman, and her man, too, will be mighty grateful to you. What is more, they'll talk about it all through the camp, and you'll see that everybody here will have a good word and a pleasant smile for you to-morrow."

Jack had taken off most of his wet things, and had thrown them on the ground beside him, and now the woman came over to where he was, holding a great, soft buffalo robe, which, with a laugh, she threw around him, almost covering him up. Then she went back, and in a moment threw across the lodge to him a pair of boy's moccasins and a pair of leggings. Then she went out of the lodge.

"Now," said Hugh, "take off all your things, put on them leggings and moccasins, and set here by the fire with that robe around you. The woman will hang up your things, and they'll be dry in a little while, and then you can dress again if you want to. I'm going out now to look after the horses, and maybe to look around the camp. Or, if you like, I'll just see after the horses, and then come back, and when you're dressed we'll go around the camp together."

"I'd like that best of all, Hugh, if you don't mind waiting. I suppose you've got a lot of friends in the camp you'd like to see."

"Yes," said Hugh, "I expect I have, but there ain't no great hurry. I'll have plenty of time to see them and visit with them;" and he went out.

CHAPTER XV.

INDIANS AT HOME.

WHEN Hugh and Jack went out of the lodge together, the sun was already touching the sharp peaks of the distant snow-patched mountains. The air was cool, and the sky still clear and bright, only toward the east it was beginning to take on the shade of dark blue which foretells the night. The camp was active. Women were hurrying up from the stream, each carrying one or two buckets of water. Men were walking here and there; boys racing to and fro, chasing each other, wrestling and shouting; from the piles of wood which stood near the door of each, little girls were carrying sticks into the lodges; boys and women were tethering horses to pins driven in the ground close in front of the lodges; a few men were coming into the camp, with red meat piled behind them on their horses. From different lodges, near and far, came loud voiced callings, while, riding around the circle of the camp, just within the lodges, passed an old man, who constantly shouted with powerful voice. From the smoke hole of every lodge, smoke was rising, and toward some of them, naked men were directing their steps.

"Oh, Hugh, isn't this great?" said Jack. "Hold

on a minute; let's look and listen. Isn't this wonderful! I feel as if I wanted to stop right here, and ask you what every one of these things mean."

"Well," said Hugh, "I expect likely you never did see anything like this before, and maybe you never had no idea of what an Indian camp is. 'Course, it's all a pretty old story to me, but I'd like right well to tell you all I know about it."

"Well," said Jack, "let's begin right now. What is that old man doing that's riding around on the white horse, holloaing so?"

"Why that's the camp crier," said Hugh; "he's telling the news, and maybe giving the chief's orders; telling the people what the camp is to do to-morrow. Listen a minute, and I'll see if I can tell what he's saying." He held up his hand for Jack to keep silence, and after listening for a moment or two, he smiled and said, "Why, son, he's talking about you, now."

"About me!" said Jack.

"Yes, he's telling how you fished Little Plume's girl out of the creek. You see, he's kind o' like a newspaper to the camp here; he tells them everything that's happened, and what he was saying then was, that the white boy that came into the camp with White Bull—that's me—had ridden into the river and pulled out the child of Little Plume, after she had fallen off her horse and cut her head."

"Well, that's funny," said Jack; "I never supposed that anything that I'd do would be worth telling a lot of people about."

"Well," said Hugh, "that's what he was saying then; he's getting so far off now I can't hear much of

what he says. That shouting that you hear from these different lodges is men inviting their friends to come and eat and smoke with him. That's a great thing among these people; they like to have their friends come and see them, and eat with them. It's just like if I lived somewhere in the east, and asked you and your uncle, and a lot of my other friends to come and take dinner with me."

"Why," said Jack, "that's just what it must be, a regular dinner party, only, instead of writing the invitations, they shout them out from the lodge."

"That's just about the size of it," said Hugh. "Well, come on now; let's go over to the head chief's lodge, and sort o' report to him; tell him we've come. He's a good old man, and he'll be glad to see us both, I expect."

The sun had set, and in the growing dusk they walked across the wide circle to the head chief's lodge. Just before reaching the door, they passed an old woman, who, as she saw Hugh, gave an exclamation of surprise, and spoke to him, shaking hands with him as she did so. Then, after a moment's talk, she turned and shook hands with Jack, and passed on. "Now, you notice that, son," said Hugh; "that old woman shook hands with both of us, but you mustn't expect other women to do that. She's old, and her husband's a great friend of mine, so she knows me well; but most women won't look at you nor speak to you, much less shake hands with you, until they get to be mighty well acquainted with you. They're shy like."

When they reached the lodge door, Hugh bent down and passed in first, closely followed by Jack;

then turning to the right he advanced a few steps, and spoke to the old man who was sitting at the back of the lodge. The Indian placed his right hand over his mouth, as he gave an exclamation of surprise, and then clapping his hands together, motioned Hugh to come and sit by his side. Jack followed, and sat down, and in a moment the old man leaned over and shook hands with him. "Ironshirt says he's right glad you've come to the camp, son, and that he heard this afternoon what you had done, and it's good. He hopes you will stop here for a while; all the people will be glad to have so friendly a person living with them."

Hugh and the old man talked together for a long time, while Jack sat on the bed before the flickering fire, and watched what was going on in the lodge. In that half of it which was to the left of the door, there were three women, and an uncountable number of little children. Two or three of the smallest were babies; two of them confined on boards which stood against the lodge poles, while one, a little older, and absolutely naked, rolled on the floor, so close to the fire that Jack felt a little nervous lest it should crawl into it. Two little girls, six or eight years old sat on the bed between two of the women; each one had a little robe about her, and above this robe, and looking over the little girl's shoulder, was the head of a little puppy, which every now and then squirmed and struggled, seeming to make frantic efforts to get free. There were two boys, ten or twelve years old, each of whom held in his hand a bow and some arrows, but soon after Hugh had entered, these two passed out of the lodge, and were not seen again. The women were cooking

some dried meat which looked to Jack like strips and fragments of black leather, which one threw into the pot which hung over the fire, while the other occasionally stirred this pot with a stick, and watched another which was partly full of a dark bubbling mass, which looked like jam.

The talk between the two men lasted a long time, but Jack did not grow weary of watching what was happening in the lodge. Suddenly from without, and very far off, came a long, shrill, quivering cry, and every one ceased talking. One of the women swiftly passed out of the lodge, and, after a moment or two, returned to the door and called out something to those within. Hugh turned to Jack, and said, "Somebody has been wounded by enemies. Let's go out and see what it is;" and they rose and passed out of the lodge into the darkness. There was much excitement without, and many people were hurrying from all quarters toward the lodge where Jack and Hugh were to pass the night.

"What do you suppose it is, Hugh?" said Jack.

"I don't know," said Hugh, "no more than you do; only what the woman said; what I told you." As they walked along, they saw before them a throng of people on foot crowding around several men on horse-back, who were riding toward Little Plume's lodge. As Hugh and Jack pushed their way through the crowd, they saw these men alight, and two of them helped the third into the lodge. Then, presently, when they had elbowed their way through the crowd of men, women and children, and had nearly reached the door, a man stepped out of the lodge, talked for a few moments in

a loud voice, and the crowd dispersed as rapidly as it had gathered.

Hugh and Jack entered the lodge, and saw there, old John Monroe, and a small, slender, handsome Indian sitting on one of the beds, eating, while on another bed a third man was stretched out, and an old Indian knelt by him, washing a wound in his shoulder.

"Why, hallo, Hugh, h' ole man! You was come. My glad my see you. Hallo, Jack! You come too. That good."

"Yes, John," said Hugh, "son and me made up our minds that we couldn't get through the summer without coming up to visit with you folks for a little while, and here we are. But what's the trouble? How did the young man get hurt? Hallo, Little Plume! How are you? *Ok'yi.*" Jack shook hands with John and Little Plume, and for a few minutes all the men talked earnestly; then Hugh turned to Jack and said, "Well, I expect you want to know what this is all about, son, so I'll tell you, but you'll have to start in and learn Piegan for yourself, if you're going to stop all summer in this camp, because it's mighty slow work to have to have everything interpreted to you. It seems that John, Little Plume and Yellow Wolf—this young fellow here—started out early this morning, up into the hills, to try to kill some buckskin, for Little Plume's wife wanted to make some leggings. They had left their horses and were hunting along on foot, pretty well spread out, John to the north, Yellow Wolf in the middle, and Little Plume to the South, when suddenly Yellow Wolf walked into three Crows that were lying hid in the pines. They must have

heard him coming, or anyhow, they saw him before he did them, and two of them let drive at him with their arrows, and one shot at him with a gun. The first arrow, he thinks, hit him in the shoulder, striking the bone, and kind o' turned him around, and he dropped. The other arrow and the gun missed him. When he fell, the three Indians jumped forward to strike him, but he raised up and let fly with his old fuke, and killed the leading man, and then he pulled his bow and arrow and shot at the second man. This made 'em see that he wasn't dead, and both the Crows dodged into the brush. When John and Little Plume heard the two shots so close together, they knew that Yellow Wolf had been attacked, and they both came down to see what was the matter, and when the two Crows heard them coming, they got up and skipped out as lively as they knew how. John got a shot at one of 'em, but he don't think he hit him. The country there is rough and broken with lots of pines, and they didn't know but there might be a big party of Crows somewheres near, and the boy here was wounded, so they struck the enemy and took his scalp, and got the boy back to the horses and brought him in. Little Plume's going to take a lot of young men out there in the morning, and see if they can find them Crows. I expect likely it was just a little party coming down to steal the Piegans' horses. Likely they'll travel all night and be far enough away before morning comes. Little Plume says that there may be a big war party not far off, and thinks that the young men ought to stand guard over their horses to-night; but I expect they won't do it. An Indian will take all sorts of pre-

cautions to avoid being surprised, except the precaution of staying awake. They have got to be pretty badly scared before they'll do that. They're great fellows to take their natural rest."

"Well, how is the young man, Hugh," said Jack "is he badly hurt?"

"No," said Hugh, "I reckon not. I haven't looked at him, but from what these men say, I judge he'll be all right in a few days. I'll ask Red Bear, there; he's doctoring him." He spoke to the old man, who had finished attending to Yellow Wolf, and was now gravely smoking a long pipe that Little Plume had passed to him. He spoke a few words, and Hugh said to Jack, "The old man says that he's not badly hurt; that before long he will be quite well."

A little later, Little Plume spoke to Hugh quite earnestly for some moments, and then stood on his feet, reached over and shook Jack's hand. "He says," said Hugh, "that his woman told him what you did this afternoon, and he will always remember it; that you will always be like a son to him, because you saved the life of his little girl. He cannot tell you much of what he feels, but his heart is big toward you. He wants you to stop here in this lodge as long as you can, and if you see anything of his that you want, you must take it, for it is yours."

"Well," said Jack, "I don't see why they make so much of a fuss over my getting the girl to shore. If he wants to thank anybody, he ought to thank Pawnee. I could not have done anything without him. Tell him that I am glad I could help the little gal, and

that it makes me feel good that he should be friendly toward me."

For a long time they sat there by the fire, the men talking in a language that Jack could not understand, while he listened to the sounds without, and watched the sights within. Now and then would be heard the swift galloping of a horse, as some one rode rapidly across the circle of the camp. Young men shouted shrilly to each other. From various points came the sound of drumming and of distant singing. Now and then a party of four or five would pass by on foot, chanting some plaintive, melancholy air. There was a distant hum of voices, above which occasionally rose the sweetly shrill laugh of a woman. Within the lodge, the fire snapped and flickered. One by one the women and children lay down upon their beds, and wrapped their brown robes about them, and lay still. The men talked on and the long-stemmed pipe passed from hand to hand. As the men talked, their hands flew in the graceful gesticulations of the sign language, and sometimes Jack imagined that he could tell what it was that they were talking about. Jack watched and listened, and listened and watched, but by and by his eyes grew dim, and he began to nod.

Hugh noticed this after a little, and turning to him, said, "Well, son, I reckon you're tired. We've had a long day, and I expect you'd like to go to sleep. There's your bed," he added, pointing, "under where your clothes hang. You'd better turn in in them buffalo robes, and get a good night's rest." Jack was glad to do it, and before long had forgotten where he was.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN INDIAN FRIEND.

THE next few days Jack spent in the camp, going about from lodge to lodge with Hugh, being introduced to his friends, being invited to feast by them, and listening to their speeches and stories, which, of course, he did not understand at all. There was so much that was strange, in this simple savage life that he did not get tired of watching the people and wondering what their different actions meant.

One day Hugh had gone off to the head chief's lodge, and had left Jack alone in front of their home. The sun shone brightly down on the camp, but a cool breeze, laden with the breath of the snow fields far above, swept down from the mountains and made Jack feel chilly. He sat down in the lee of the lodge, where it was warm and comfortable in the sun. Before he had been there very long a shadow fell across the ground, and he looked up to see standing near him an Indian boy about his own age. Presently the boy sat down beside him and began to make signs, often pointing up toward the mountains, but Jack understood nothing of what he wished to say, and at length the boy seemed to become discouraged, and stopped making signs, and they sat there side by side looking at each other. Jack saw that he had no braids

hanging down on each side of his face, as all the other children had. His hair seemed to have been cut off, and now, although it was long and hanging down on his shoulders, it was not yet long enough to be braided. Instead of being naked, as most boys of his age in the camp were, this boy wore leggings and a shirt of buckskin. He had a pleasant, intelligent face.

After sitting there for a little while, to Jack's great astonishment the boy suddenly said: "How you like it here?"

"Why—why!" stammered Jack, "first class. But what makes you talk English?"

"Oh," said the boy, "I talk English all right. I was raised with white people in Benton. I have been to school four or five years, and I can read and write pretty good. My name's Joe; Bloodman, they call me in Piegan."

"Well," said Jack, "I'm mighty glad to know you; glad to find anybody here in the camp that I can talk to besides Hugh and old John Monroe."

"Oh," said Joe, "there's quite a few people in this camp that can talk some English; there'll be more when they've all moved in. There's some white men here that have Indian wives, and some of their children can talk English pretty good, too."

"Yes," said Jack, "Hugh told me about that; but I haven't seen anybody yet that seemed to be able to talk to me."

"Well," said Joe, "that's a fact. A good many of 'em don't like to talk English, and I'll tell you why; because they're afraid that they'll make mistakes, and then maybe you'd laugh at 'em."

"Great Scott!" said Jack, "there wouldn't be any sense in that. I might just as well never try to learn anything about living here in the camp for fear that somebody would laugh at me. But say, ain't it great that you can talk English. Do you live here?"

"Yes," said Joe, "I live right here. The man that raised me died last year, and his wife went off to the States. She told me she'd take me along if I wanted to go, but I told her I'd rather stay in this country. So I came back to the camp, and now I live here with my uncle. He's Fox Eye, one of the chiefs of the Fat Roaster band. Say," he added, "where did you come from?"

Jack told him, and how he had come up from the south with Hugh, at John Monroe's invitation, and that he expected to spend a couple of months with the tribe.

"Ah," said Joe, "that's good. Pretty soon after we've had the Medicine Lodge the people will move out onto the prairie to kill buffalo. The women want new lodge skins, and food will soon be needed. Do you think you'll like it here?"

"Yes, you bet!" said Jack; "it's the bulliest place I've ever been in. I never get tired of wondering what the people are doing; and why they're doing it. Say, you could tell me a lot about all these things, couldn't you?"

"Maybe so," said Joe; "I know some of the things, but I've been away from the tribe a whole lot, and then I'm only a boy, so I don't know much. The old men are the ones who know things; they could tell you. Get White Bull to ask them about all the differ-

ent ceremonies and the customs. Maybe they'd tell him when they wouldn't tell you and me. Do you like to hunt?" and Jack answered: "You bet I do! I've never done much hunting, but I've killed some deer and antelope and elk, and down south of here, as we were coming along, I killed a buffalo."

"You've got a good horse," said Joe. "I've seen him. He'll catch the fastest cows. Your lodge will always have plenty of meat."

"Yes," said Jack, "he's a good horse; fast, and good to hunt with."

After a little, Joe asked him: "Ever hunt sheep?"

"No, I never exactly hunted 'em. Just after we crossed the Yellowstone, coming north, three or four sheep pretty nearly came into our camp one morning, and I killed one there. Those are the only ones I ever saw."

"There are sheep up there," said Joe, pointing to a flat mountain not many miles away.

"Is that so?" said Jack. "I shouldn't think there'd be any as close to this camp as that. I should think the Indians'd kill 'em all off."

"Pooh!" said Joe; "these Indians don't hunt in the mountains, they hunt on the prairie, they kill buffalo, but they don't go much into the mountains, nor into the timber; they're afraid of bears. Lots of bears here. S'pose you feel like it, some day you and me go up on the mountain, maybe kill a sheep."

"Oh, wouldn't I like it," said Jack; "those mountains look so big and gray and rough. I'd just love to get up on 'em and climb round there."

"Well," said Joe, "s'pose to-morrow's a good day, maybe we go up there."

"All right," said Jack, "I'd like nothing better, and I'll speak to Hugh about it as soon as he comes back. He's gone off to the head chief's lodge now."

"Yes," said Joe, "I know; they're having a big talk over there. I don't know what it's about. I expect maybe it's something about the Medicine Lodge. That comes pretty soon now."

"Yes," said Jack, "I heard Hugh say that he thought it would come before long. I want to see that too."

"Well," said Joe, "that'll last four days, and then pretty soon after that I guess the camp'll move out onto the prairie."

The boys were still talking there when Hugh returned to the lodge, and Jack at once spoke to him about what Joe had proposed.

"Why yes," said Hugh, "that's a good thing to do. Likely as not you might kill a sheep up there, and anyhow, it's a good climb, and it'll do you good to get up onto the high hills and look 'out over the prairie. I can't go with you, myself, because the old man over there wants me to spend the day with him to-morrow, but you and Joe can go, and I guess you won't get into no mischief. Ever been up there, Joe?"

"Yes, sir," said Joe, "I've been up there a good many times."

"All right," said Hugh; "go along then; but see that you don't get into no trouble. If you see any bears, don't bother with 'em; just let 'em go off. Go up there and kill a sheep, if you can, and spend the day, but try and get in before dark."

The next morning the two boys started. Joe rode a little fat, wiry pony, without either saddle or bridle, and Jack, as usual, rode Pawnee. The trail up the mountain was narrow, overgrown and winding, so that in many places it was hard to see where it went, but Jack noticed that all along it, the twigs of the aspens had been bent and broken by persons riding along it, so that it was not difficult to follow. Every now and then, however, it left the aspens and passed out through a little park where the grass was long and bent in all directions by the passage of animals. Some of these were elk, and Jack saw a bear track or two. In such open parks the trail was quite lost, for in passing across such open places the Indians no longer follow one behind another in single file, but spread out, each horse taking his own way. The mountain side was absolutely wild, and looked as if it might shelter any number of wild animals, but nothing larger than a squirrel was seen, and at last they reached the steep, grassy slopes which lay just below the rocks. Here Joe said they must leave the horses, and they picketed them there.

Not many yards above where they stood, the stones, fallen from the mountain side, lay piled up steep, and above them rose sharply the vertical cliffs which formed the summits of the mountain. Jack looked up at the rocks and said to Joe: "Do we have to get up on the top there?"

"Yes," said Joe, "that's the place to look for sheep. Pretty good climb up there, ain't it?"

"Yes," said Jack, "it looks a long way, but we've got plenty of time to do it in."

"That's so," said Joe, and they started, Joe leading and Jack following close behind, carrying his rifle in his hand. It was hard work climbing up over these steep rocks, some of which were just balanced so that if one stepped on them near the edge they tipped, making the footing uncertain, and to the white boy, accustomed only to the exercise of riding, the work was hard. Before long he was quite out of breath, and the exertion made the perspiration stream down his face, though the day was not a warm one and a cool breeze blew along the mountain side.

Presently Joe stopped and sat down in the lee of the great mass of rock, saying, as he did so: "Pretty hard work; makes me puff and blow plenty, and you too."

"Yes," said Jack, as he threw himself on the ground, "I haven't much wind. I'm not used to being as high up in the air as this, and then I'm not used to going much on foot. Say, Joe," he added, after a pause, "why do you carry a bow and arrows?" for the only arms Joe carried except a knife in his belt were a bow and arrows, in a case attached to a strap which passed over his shoulder.

"Pretty good reason," said Joe; "I ain't got no gun, and this is all I've got to hunt with."

"Well," said Jack, "you must have to get up pretty close to your game to kill 'em with bow and arrow, don't you?"

"Yes," said Joe, "pretty close. Of course buffalo hunting you ride up right close to the cow. Sheep and deer and antelope you have to crawl up as near as you can, and then maybe you have to wait, sometimes

a long time, perhaps half a day. Then maybe the animals come near you, or go to some place where you can get near them, so you kill 'em. This bow shoots pretty strong. I've sent an arrow so deep into a cow that the feathers were wet with the blood, but then I never used a bow much. Some boys in the tribe can send an arrow pretty nearly through a buffalo. Some of the men, the best hunters, can shoot clear through a buffalo, so that the arrow falls out on the other side. One man in the camp one time killed two buffalo with one shot; the arrow went clear through the first one, and stuck in the second so deep that it killed it. Queer, wasn't it?"

"Well, I should say it was," said Jack. "I'd hate to have anybody shoot at me with one of those things."

"Yes," said Joe, "a bow shoots pretty strong, and then it don't make any noise; sometimes you miss a shot with the first arrow, you get a chance to shoot once or twice or three times more. The animal don't see you or hear you, just keeps on feeding."

After two or three more rests they found themselves on a stone platform, just below the foot of what Joe called the reef, meaning the great wall of rock which rose sheer to the top of the mountain. Here Joe pointed out several trails, winding about among the stones and sometimes passing over them, which he said were sheep trails, and now he warned Jack that they must look out carefully, for they might see sheep at almost any time. They went forward along one of these trails, climbing up pretty well toward the foot of the reef, and keeping a good lookout ahead and below them. As they went on, the reef broke away to

their left, and Jack could see that a narrow and deep valley ran out from the mountain side, with grass and willows along the course of the stream which flowed through it. Very slowly and cautiously they proceeded, seeing nothing and hearing no sounds. They had gone perhaps three-quarters of a mile, and had followed the sheep trail up to the crest of a little ridge, beyond which there seemed to be a sag which ran down into the narrow, rock-strewn valley. Joe had his bow in his hand, an arrow on the string, and Jack followed him, ready to shoot at an instant's warning. As they topped the ridge there was a clatter below them, and Joe, suddenly drawing back his right arm, let fly an arrow at something that Jack could not see. In a moment Jack stood beside him, and saw not more than fifty yards away, a sheep running hard, and with a dark smear on its side, just behind the fore-leg, which showed that it was wounded.

"Shoot him!" said Joe. "Shoot him, quick!" and Jack threw his gun to his shoulder, but just as his eye settled into the sights, the sheep staggered, came to its knees, rose and staggered on a few steps, and then fell on its side. Jack's shot was not needed.

"Hurrah!" he said to Joe, as he slapped him on the shoulder; "that was a good shot and a quick shot, too. I did not suppose anybody could shoot like that with a bow and arrow. I'll have to get you to teach me how to shoot, Joe. I'd a heap rather kill anything with a bow while I'm out here than use my gun. Wouldn't it be great to go out with the Indians and hunt buffalo with nothing but a bow and arrow?"

Joe smiled and seemed pleased, partly, perhaps,

with his shot, and partly because Jack was so glad that he had made a good one. They went down over the steep, slipping stone slide to where the sheep had fallen, but it did not lie there, for in its dying struggles it had rolled over and over down the steep slope, until now it lay on its side on a little grassy bank close to the trickle of water that flowed through the ravine. The arrow which still remained in its side was broken.

"Well," said Joe, "we've got some meat, anyhow. Now we've got to butcher and carry it back to the horses. Are you pretty strong? Can you carry a pretty good load?"

"I don't know," said Jack. "I guess if we're going to take in the whole sheep we've got to make two trips of it."

"Yes," said Joe, "I guess that's so."

They butchered and skinned the sheep, a yearling ram, but when they divided it into two parts and each tried to shoulder one they found that the load was too heavy to be carried; so Joe took a hind quarter and Jack a fore quarter and the skin, and carried it back to a point on the mountain nearly above the horses. Then they returned and brought the second load.

While they were resting, Jack said to Joe: "What is there up on top, Joe? I'd like to get up there, and take a look over at the country. It's only about the middle of the day, is it?"

Joe looked at the sun, knowingly, and said: "That's it. Noon."

"Well," said Jack, "we've got three or four hours before we'll have to start home. Let's climb up on top."

"All right," said Joe; "let's do it."

Before long they started upward toward the foot of the reef, aiming for a place where the rocks seemed broken away and discoloured, as if water flowed down there at some time of the year. At Joe's suggestion, Jack left his coat and the handkerchief he wore about his neck spread out over the meat, for this, Joe told him, would keep the birds and animals from feeding on it. The climb up to the top of the reef was not nearly so hard as Jack had supposed it would be, and it seemed that it did not take them more than half an hour to gain the high table-land that formed the mountain's summit. Here they could see a long way in every direction. The mountain was a great shoulder thrust out toward the prairie from other higher mountains behind it. Its top was almost flat, and was covered with fine broken stones. One might ride a horse over it in almost any direction. No trees grew there and no grass. It was all gray rock. A few patches of snow still lay on it, although it was now almost midsummer, and in several deep valleys that pierced the great shoulder, deep snow banks were still white among the scattering pines. On either side of this shoulder was a deep, wide valley. In one, lay the great lake from which flowed the river that Hugh and Jack had crossed on their way to the camp, in the other was a considerable stream, with a few small lakes along its course, the valley itself being overgrown with timber, except for an occasional little open, grassy park. Stretching away far to the east lay the prairie, green for the most part, but with the ridges brown, and out of it, a little to the north of east, rose

three shadowy masses, which Jack felt sure must be mountains.

"What are those, Joe?" he said, pointing to them.

"Oh," said Joe, "those are the Three Buttes—Sweet-grass Hills, you know. That's where the camp will go when they go to hunt buffalo."

"My!" said Jack, "you can see a long way, can't you?"

"Yes," said Joe, "plenty prairie, ain't there?"

"You bet! But it's cold up here, Joe," said Jack; "let's walk around a little. I'd like to walk over to the other side and look down into that other valley. It don't look as if anybody had ever been up there. It's just as wild as wild can be."

"No," said Joe, "not many people go up there. Sometimes Kutenais or Stonies come down from the north and go up there to hunt. Not often though."

"Is there much game there, Joe?"

"I don't know," was the answer, "but last year when I was camped here with my uncle, a little camp of Stonies came down, and went up there and stayed four days, and when they came back they had two moose, an elk, and lots of sheep and goats."

"Jerusalem!" said Jack; "there must be lots of game."

"Yes, I suppose there is; plenty for everybody to eat."

They walked over toward the other side of the shoulder, talking as they went, and as they passed down through a little hollow, suddenly a bird, about as big as a banty hen, brown and black, with some white on it, flew up from the ground and struck

against Jack's knees, and then dropped down and began to flutter about at his feet. Joe sprang forward and struck at it with his bow, but Jack caught his hand and said: "Hold on, hold on; don't kill it; let's see what it means." They stood there for a moment or two and watched the little bird, and suddenly Jack said: "I believe that's a white-tailed ptarmigan, and it's got a nest, or young ones right here somewhere. Do you know what it is, Joe?"

"No," said Joe, "I don't know what you call it; I've seen plenty of them before; they live up here in the snow, and in winter they're all white; it's some kind of a chicken, I guess."

"Yes," said Jack, "that must be what it is. Ain't I glad I've seen one. I wish though we could find the nest, or see the little ones."

As he said this, Joe very slowly and carefully stooped down, and reaching out his hand grasped something between two of the stones, and then standing up again said, "Here's one."

It was the tiniest little chicken that Jack had ever seen, hardly bigger than his thumb, covered with fluffy yellow and brown down, and looking fearlessly at its captors with its bright brown eyes. The mother bird had drawn off a little bit while they were talking, but now seeing that one of her young was in danger, she rushed at Jack again, pecking furiously at his trousers, and sometimes holding them and flapping against his legs with her wing.

"Oh," said Jack, "isn't he a beauty; isn't he a perfect beauty. Wouldn't I give anything to carry half a dozen of those back to the States, and try to

raise them; but it would be no good I suppose to take this one down; it never would live down on the prairie, and we couldn't get anything to feed it, anyhow."

"No," said Joe, "no good to try to raise it, and it's too small to eat."

"That's so," said Jack, and stooping down he opened his hand, when the little one ran nimbly over the rocks, followed much more slowly by its mother.

The boys went on over to the edge of the rocks and looked down into the wide valley below them; then they turned and walked a mile or two up toward the main range. Joe pointed out to Jack some places where sheep had recently stamped out beds and lain in them, but nothing living was seen. At length, as the sun began to sink toward the west, they went back to the point where they had ascended to the table-land, and going down to the meat, carried it down to their horses, packed it on them and returned to camp.

CHAPTER XVII.

AN ENEMY IN CAMP.

ONE morning, a few days after Jack's sheep hunt, Joe made his appearance at John Monroe's lodge, carrying a bundle under his arm, and finding Jack eating his breakfast within, sat down beside him. When Jack had finished, Joe removed the piece of calico which covered the bundle, and held out to Jack a buckskin shirt, heavily fringed along the arms and on the sides, and beautifully ornamented on back and front with stained porcupine quills.

"My aunt, Fox Eye's woman, sent you this" said Joe.

"Sent it to me?"

"Yes, she made it. Part of it is the skin of the sheep we killed. She thought maybe you'd like it."

"Like it, well I should say I do. It's the handsomest thing I ever saw. I've seen some of the men wearing coats and shirts fixed up like this, and I've wished I had one, too. Tell her I'm awfully obliged to her, won't you?"

"Well," said Joe, "you can't say that in Indian. I'll tell her it made you laugh when you got the shirt; then she'll be glad, too. Fox Eye and six lodges are going over to Grassy Lakes to kill antelope, for clothing; do you want to come?"

"Why yes, of course I want to come. I wonder if I could. You see, I've got to talk to Hugh before I go off anywhere, for before I left the ranch I told my uncle I'd try to do what Hugh said, always."

"That's good, White Bull is a wise man; it's good to listen to him. Everybody in the camp respects him."

"When's Fox Eye going to start?"

"Goin' to start to-day, maybe go along the mountains to Little Lake, under Chief mountain; camp there to-night. It's not far. Then go on east."

"Let's go out and see if we can find Hugh now, but first, I want to put on my shirt."

Just as the boys were about to get up and leave the lodge, John Monroe's wife called to Jack, "Here, you goin' to be Injin, got to wear moccasins," and she threw across the lodge to him a pair of prettily beaded moccasins with parfleche soles.

"All right," said Jack, "I'll put on moccasins and leggings too, if you'll give them to me," and sitting down he removed his shoes and replaced them by the moccasins, which exactly fitted him. He did not know that the kind-hearted woman had taken one of his socks while he slept, and got the size of his foot from that.

The boys started out from the lodge to look for Hugh, Jack feeling a little shy in his new finery, and a little bit afraid that people who saw him might laugh at him. Nobody seemed to do so, and he saw only the pleasant smiles that had greeted him ever since he had first come into the camp.

After a little search they found Hugh sitting on

the ground near one of the lodges, talking with two other old men, and stopped by them, waiting until they should have ceased talking. Then Hugh looked up at Jack and said, "Well, son, what is it? I can always tell when you want to ask me something, as far as I can see you. What are you proposing to do now?"

"Well, Hugh," said Jack, "it's this way; Joe says that his uncle and a few lodges are going off to Grassy Lakes after antelope skins, and he asked me if I'd like to go along. Of course I'd like to go, but I don't want to unless you think I'd better."

"Hum," said Hugh; "Grassy Lakes; that's about three or four days, isn't it, Joe?"

"Yes, sir," said Joe, "about that. They thought they'd go over and camp there three or four days, and then come back. They say there's lots of antelope on the prairie, and they thought they could get what skins they wanted and get back in that time."

"Well," said Hugh, "I don't know; I don't like to have you going so far off with such a little party, and then of course there's always a chance of your running onto a war party; like as not, Crows or Assinaboines or Gros Ventres may be wandering around there, killing buffalo, or going up to the Blood camp, and you might get into some trouble."

"Oh," said Jack, "I don't believe there's any danger of that kind. It'll be just a little hunting trip, and I'd like the ride; and I'll try to take good care of myself and not do any foolish things."

"Well, you've got pretty good sense, and I've always found I could depend on you pretty well. I guess if you like you can go, but I think I'll go too."

"Why that's better yet. I guess you'd like the ride too; you've been sitting round camp now for quite a while, and I haven't done anything except when I climbed the mountain the other day with Joe."

Hugh turned to Joe and said, "How is it, boy; is there plenty of room in Fox Eye's lodge?"

"I guess so," said Joe; "nobody lives there but him and my aunt and me. The lodge is big, there ought to be room for two more people."

"Well," said Hugh, "you go over and ask your uncle if Jack and me can come along and stop in his lodge, and let me know."

The boys walked quickly across the circle of the camp, and presently found themselves at Fox Eye's lodge. When they entered they found Joe's aunt busily engaged in packing things up, and the interior of the lodge almost dismantled. Fox Eye, himself, had gone out to bring in the horses, and when Joe gave Hugh's message, the woman replied in a high-pitched, scolding voice that almost alarmed Jack, for he could not think what she was finding fault with, unless it was the proposition that they should quarter themselves on her.

After she had finished speaking, Joe said to Jack:

"Well, let's go over and tell him."

"Well, but Joe," said Jack, "what did she say? I thought she was mad because we wanted to go with you."

"Ho," said Joe, "she was mad; that is, she was a little mad, but that isn't the reason why; she said, 'Why does White Bull talk like that? Doesn't he

know that if he wants to stop in our lodge he shall come into it and sit down and stay as long as he wants? Tell him he talks like a foolish person, and that Fox Eye will be glad to see him whenever he comes, and glad to have him stop as long as he feels like stopping.'"

The boys went back to Hugh and gave the message that Joe's aunt had sent, and Jack and Hugh went to the lodge, packed up the two beds, and got out some sugar and coffee and flour, luxuries which were to be their contribution to the supplies of Fox Eye's lodge. It occurred to Jack, also, that it would be a nice thing to give Fox Eye, himself, a present of tobacco, and to his wife some beads and red cloth, as some acknowledgement of her kindness to him. When the bundles were ready Jack went out and brought in Pawnee, saddled him, and riding out to the horse herd on the hills, selected one of their own pack animals, brought it in and tied it up ready for packing when the time should come for starting.

About mid-day the little train started northeast, and camped that night at a small lake not far from the base of the Chief Mountain, which rose like a great wall to the west of them. Two days more brought them to the Grassy Lakes, and there they camped, to stop for four or five days. While they were marching, Hugh usually rode with the two boys, off to one side, and they hunted antelope with some success. Jack killed two and Hugh three, and then Jack loaned his rifle to Joe, who proved himself a good hunter and a good shot, and killed four antelope. The hunters among the Indians had also killed a number, and before

long much meat and many hides were put out to dry at each camp. Buffalo were in sight all the time, but the Indians did not disturb them, for it had been understood before they left the camp that no buffalo should be killed. A sharp lookout was kept all the time for enemies, but no signs were seen that any one was in the country.

The second day of their stay at Grassy Lakes was dull and overcast, and the wind which had been always from the west, now worked around to the north and northeast. Hugh and the Indians said that they were going to have a rain storm, and that it might be a long one. Jack and Joe hunted during the day not far from camp, and each killed an antelope. They reached camp with their game in the middle of the afternoon, and after eating, Jack lay down in the lodge on the bed and went to sleep and did not wake up until after dark. When he sat up to look about him he saw that it was night, and almost every one in the lodge was in bed, and the fire was beginning to burn low. He tried to talk a little with Joe and Hugh, but both were sleepy, and presently he lay down again to sleep through the night. The fire died down, so that now it gave no light, and the heavy, regular breathing of the people in the lodge showed that all were sleeping, but Jack could not go to sleep. His long rest in the afternoon had made him wakeful, and though he turned from side to side on his soft bed of robes, sleep would not come to him. At length, after what seemed to him three or four hours, he thought he would get up and go outside of the lodge, stretch his legs, and perhaps this would make him sleep. He rose

very softly, for fear of disturbing any one, took his gun in his hand, and stepping over to the door, stood outside. For an instant he could hardly believe his eyes, for there, close in front of the lodge, was the dark form of some one stooping down and holding the rope by which one of the horses was tied in front of the lodge. Although the night was cloudy there was a moon, which enabled him to see very plainly that this was a man who was doing something with one of the ropes. In an instant it flashed through his mind that this must be an enemy stealing horses, and as he thought this, the man stood erect and then sprang on the back of the horse which started to walk away. Jack did not know what to do. A few jumps of the horse would take it out of sight. There was nothing that he could do to stop it, except to shoot, and possibly this might be one of the men in the camp who had a right to the horse. All these things flashed through Jack's mind in a moment, but he felt that he must find out what this was that was being done. He called out—not considering that the man could not understand him—"Hold on, there! What are you doing with that horse?" Evidently the man had not seen him, for as the call reached him he thrust his heels into the horse's side and brought down the rope on its back and it began to gallop.

"Hold on!" Jack called again, "or I'll shoot.

By this time there was stirring in the lodge, but there was no time to wait; Jack's gun was at his shoulder, he fired, and as the smoke cleared away he saw the riderless horse galloping on, and then it disappeared. He called:

"Help! Hugh! Joe! they're stealing the horses!" And throwing another cartridge into his gun he rushed forward to where he had last seen the horse. There on the ground was the man, trying to scramble to his feet. Jack pushed him back with the muzzle of his rifle and held the gun to his shoulder, ready to fire again, saying, "Lie still there, or I'll shoot." The man fell back and lay upon the ground still. Almost at the same instant, Hugh and Joe, followed by Fox Eye, came running up. Hugh's first question was:

"How many of 'em were there?"

"I only saw this one, I didn't want to shoot at him, but he had jumped on the horse and was riding off, and I didn't know what else to do."

Meantime, Joe and Fox Eye each, as he came up, had struck the man lying there, Joe with his bow and Fox Eye with the muzzle of his gun.

"What are they going to do with him, Hugh?" said Jack; "keep him for a prisoner?"

"Why no," said Hugh, stooping over and putting his hand on the man's breast; "I don't think we'll need to tie him up. You made a pretty good shot, son, even if it was dark."

"Did I hit him?" said Jack. "I thought he fell off the horse because I shot at him; he was just getting up when I got here, and I pushed him over with the muzzle of my gun and told him to lie still or I'd shoot again."

"Well," said Hugh, "he'll lie still all right. I guess we can leave him here till morning."

"Why, how do you mean, Hugh?" said Jack.

"Why son, he's dead."

"Dead," said Jack; "do you mean that I killed him?"

"I expect so," said Hugh, "and a good job, too." He lit a match, and stooping down, looked at the man's face and moccasins, and then spoke to Fox Eye and to the other men, who by this time had come up and were crowding about them, and then turned to Jack and said, "He's an Assinaboine, and a horse thief, and you done mighty well to shoot just the way you did. If you hadn't done that we might all have been left afoot before morning; no reason why he shouldn't have taken every hoof of stock there is in the camp. You done well, son, and I'm mighty glad of it; but how did you come to see him?"

Jack told how it was that he could not sleep, and how he had gone out of the lodge to stretch his legs, in the hope that this would make sleep come; and he gave a detailed account of all he had seen and thought and done. When he had finished, Hugh said to him again, "You done well. No man could have done better, and when you get back to the camp I expect these Indians'll think more of you than ever. Are you sure that when the man was trying to get up you touched him with your gun?"

"Why yes, of course I am, Hugh; I gave him a right hard punch with it, and he lay down right off."

"Well, if that's so, you've not only killed an enemy, but you've counted coup on him, and that makes you a warrior right off. All these people here have been thinking of you as just a boy, but from now on they'll say that you're a sure enough man, all right."

While they were talking, Hugh and Jack had re-

turned to Fox Eye's lodge, in which his wife had built up a brilliant fire. They sat down there, and while Hugh told the woman what had happened, she was warming up a kettle of food, and presently set some of it before the two. While they were eating, Fox Eye came in, followed by several men, one of whom carried in his hand the scalp of the enemy and another his bow case and quiver. The scalp was, of course, the first that Jack had ever seen, and he looked at it with some awe, nor could he rid himself of a feeling of a good deal of solemnity when he thought that he had killed a man. Joe, who had come into the lodge and sat down near him, spoke to him presently, and said, "My friend, I am glad that you have done this great thing. You have shown that you are brave. I wish that I had had the chance."

"Well," said Jack, "I wish you had had it; you could have done as much with your bow as I did with my gun."

"Weren't you afraid," said Joe, "when you ran up to that person lying on the ground?"

"No," said Jack, "I didn't think about being afraid. I expect I didn't know enough to be scared. The only thing I was afraid of was that he'd get up and run away."

Meantime, Hugh had been talking to the men, and presently, when he stopped, Fox Eye spoke for quite a long time. After he had finished, Joe whispered to Jack:

"Say, you ought to have heard what he said about you. Wouldn't I be glad if anybody talked that way about me."

"What did he say?" said Jack.

"Oh, he praised you," said Joe; "he said you were brave; didn't fear anything; that you were watchful; that you had eyes like an eagle; ears like a prairie fox; that you could hear a long ways, and see straight and shoot good. Lord, he said nice things about you."

Hugh had been speaking again, and now he turned to the two boys and said, "Now, boys, there may be more of these fellows around, and we've got to stand guard to-night and look out for these horses. I think you boys and young Bull Calf, here, had better go on watch for three hours, and then three of us will relieve you. Have you got your watch on, Jack?"

"Yes," said Jack, pulling it out, "it's half past twelve."

"Well, you three boys go out on three sides of the camp, a little way outside, and on the hills, and watch for three hours. Then, son, come in and call me, and three others will go out and relieve you. In the morning, as soon as it gets light, we'll pack up and strike for the main camp. It's liable to be dangerous here before long."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE COUNTING OF A COUP.

THE three young men, each taking his robe, prepared to go out to stand guard. Hugh placed them, Joe to the north of the camp and Bull Calf to the south, while Jack he took up to the top of the hill, west of camp, telling him that this was the most important place of all. There was no danger of any approach from the east, since the lake would protect that side.

"Now," said Hugh, as he left Jack, "you want to lie here on the ground just below the crest of the hill and watch the sky line; then if anybody comes over the hill, you'll be dead sure to see him. I would not stay always in one place, but move about a little, but do it as quietly as you can. There isn't any danger of attack, but it might be such a thing as a man or two would try to slip into the camp before morning, and take some horses. If you keep low down, you're pretty sure to see anybody before he sees you, and you can let him come up pretty close before shooting. You don't want to shoot for nothing and scare the whole camp, and then find out that you made a fool of yourself. I don't expect you will see anything, but you might, and you want to keep a sharp lookout. Likely, these Indian boys will go to sleep before very long, but I depend on you to keep awake, and that is

the reason I put you in the place where you're most likely to see anybody that comes into the camp. Call me in about three hours." Then Hugh went down to the camp.

Jack spread his robe on the ground and lay down on it and began to watch the sky line. For a little while this occupied him. He looked carefully at the different stars that showed themselves just above the crest of the hill, and after he had been there a little time, he found that although the night was dark—for by this time the moon had set and the clouds had disappeared, he could see quite plainly. After he had been watching for a while, his alertness wore off and he began to think about the events of the night.

It certainly had been exciting enough. It seemed very strange that he should happen to be the one to go out of the lodge and detect the man who was trying to take a horse, and hardly less strange that when he shot at him, he should happen to hit him. Of course, shooting quickly at a galloping figure in the dark, was a very different thing from taking a careful shot at an object during the day, and not only was it strange that he had hit him, but that he had hit him so as to kill him, for Jack now realised, that when the man was trying to get on his feet, he was only making a dying struggle. Then he thought, suppose he had only wounded him and knocked him off his horse and that, then when he ran up to him the man had shot him with his gun or with an arrow. It might just as well have happened that way as any other.

Then Jack asked himself, ought he to have shot at him? Certainly there was no other way to have re-

covered the horse, for if he had shot and missed the Indian, he would only have ridden away the faster. He might have killed the horse to be sure, but that would have been only to destroy his own people's property and would have been no better than to allow the thief to get away with the animal. It made him feel rather solemn to think what he had done; for he had never expected, that in all his life he would kill a man. He had often read about wars and the fighting of soldiers and about people being killed, but soldiers, as he had always heard, just shot at the mass of the enemy who were approaching and no man knew just what his own bullet had done. No matter how hard one of the soldiers had tried to kill an enemy, he never could feel sure that it was his bullet that had killed the man he shot at. It was a very different thing when a man fired a single shot at another and killed him. He wondered what the people at home would say, if they were to know what had happened, and he wondered, too, whether it would be best for him to tell them at home.

All the time that he was thinking, he was keeping a sharp lookout and once or twice, as Hugh had suggested, he moved a short distance north and then again south, going carefully and slowly, crouching low and keeping himself covered by his robe. Any one who had seen him at a little distance would have supposed that some large animal was passing along the hill-side. Nothing had been seen and nothing heard; a long time had passed and he had returned to the point where he had been stationed and lay there on his robe watching the crest of the hill. After a time

he began to grow sleepy, but he shook off the feeling and rose to his knees, for after what Hugh had said to him, he felt bound in honour not to neglect his post. As he crouched there, trying hard not to yield to the drowsiness which was creeping over him, he suddenly saw a bright star close to the crest of the hill disappear, and then another. His sleepiness was forgotten in an instant, he grasped his rifle tightly and, every nerve on edge, watched to see what would happen next. For a little while nothing was seen, then again he saw a star disappear and then another. These which were hidden, were close to the line of the hill, and it looked as if something or somebody was passing along close behind the hill, between the boy and the stars. Suddenly two or three bright stars, one above another, went out and did not appear again. Some one was looking over the hill. Jack raised himself a little higher on his knees and with his finger on the trigger, so that the lock should make no noise, cocked his rifle and waited. He was keyed up to the very highest pitch of excitement, and was prepared for anything.

Then came the climax, and from the dark object, whose shape he could dimly discern on the hill top, arose the plaintive, melancholy howl of a coyote. The little animal, attracted by the smell of blood, had stolen up to the top of the hill and was now calling to its fellows.

The reaction from the excitement of the moment before was extreme, and Jack felt disgusted. He knew enough to feel sure that this animal would not be where it was, if there were any enemies immedi-

ately about the camp and felt that he would be safe in lying down on his robe and going to sleep; and now that the wolf had told what it was, he felt really sleepy.

As he looked toward the camp, he could see, far on the eastern horizon, a faint pale line, which told him that the dawn was near. Drawing his robe over his head and around him, so as to conceal the light, he lit a match and looked at his watch. It was half past three and time to call Hugh.

He slipped quietly down into the camp and going into the lodge roused Hugh, and telling him the time, Hugh said to him, "You lay down now and go to sleep and I'll call two other men and we'll watch until it gets light, which won't be long. Then, as soon as day breaks, we will start back for the main camp."

Jack was soon fast asleep, and it was two hours later when Hugh called him and told him to get up and eat breakfast, for the camp was ready to move. They were soon on their way and three days later reached the main camp on the Saint Mary's River without adventure.

Here they found that the ceremonies of the Medicine Lodge had for some reason been set forward and were already in progress. The Lodge had been built and consecrated by the Medicine Lodge women, the sacrifices had been hung on it, the sacred tongues had been divided among the people in the camp, presents had been given, old quarrels had been made up, old friendships strengthened. All day long in their shelter, the men, whose duty it was to keep the rain away, were dancing and whistling; and other sacred dances were going on in various parts of the camp.

After the returning party had pitched their lodges, Hugh and Jack started out to see what they could of the ceremonies that yet remained. Pushing their way through the crowd of people, who stood and sat about the Medicine Lodge, they reached the inner circle about which the men were seated.

Hugh whispered to Jack, "I am glad you are going to see this anyhow. These young men, that get up and make speeches, are counting their coups. They are telling the brave things that they have done in wars during the last year and you will notice whenever one tells of some very brave thing that he has done, the men sitting at the drums pound on them. There is Redshirt! I'll interpret to you what he says when he gets through." A young Indian rose to his feet, stepped out into the open space, spoke earnestly for three or four minutes, making many signs, and when he finished and sat down, the drummers beat their drums, and then a woman, leading two horses, made her way into the open space, and threw down the ropes.

"There," said Hugh; "Redshirt said something like this. 'In the Spring I went to war; I went down the Little river; I found a camp of Assiniboines. While I watched, a young man and a boy come riding out toward me. I think they were going to get horses. When they got close, I shot them both and counted coup and scalped them and took the horses they were riding!' You saw that woman come out and give him those two horses. She is Antelope Woman, and her uncle was killed last year by the Assiniboines. You see when Redshirt killed these two people, he wiped

away her tears, and now she wants to show that she thanks him for giving her revenge on the Assiniboines."

Jack was intensely interested at all this and listened and watched, and although he could not understand what was said, he could gather from the signs and from the applause of the listeners something of the meaning of each man's speech. The counting of the coups lasted some time, but at last the intervals between the speakers grew longer. Suddenly Hugh rose to his feet and stepped forward to the open space, holding fast to Jack's arm and pulling him after him, so that in a moment they stood out there in the open, gazed at by all the people. Hugh made a short speech, pointing at Jack as he did so, and when he ended, the drummers struck their drums with a great noise and many of the people shouted. Hugh turned and was about to lead Jack back to the place where they had been sitting, when suddenly a woman's voice was heard at the edge of the crowd, and turning, Hugh saw John Monroe's wife leading a horse toward them; he waited a moment, and when she entered the open space, took the rope and, leading the horse, retired with Jack without the circle.

It had all happened so suddenly, that Jack did not know what to make of it, and when Hugh stopped and looked down at him with an amused twinkle in his eye, Jack said, "What in the world does this all mean, Hugh?"

"Why," said the old man, smiling, "I thought this was a pretty good time for you to count your first coup, and as I knew that you could not do it for yourself, because you can't talk Piegan, I had to do it

for you, and John Monroe's wife, she came and gave you a horse. Pretty decent looking horse, too, it is," he said walking around the animal, "looks like it might run—"

"But say, Hugh, you don't mean to say that you told them about that Indian t ying to steal our horse and said that I had killed him.'

"That's what," said Hugh.

"Well, but, Hugh, that sounds like boasting, even if I didn't know what you were going to do. Nobody knows that I didn't know about it, except you."

"Pooh," said Hugh, "that's nothing; that's all right. This is the one time in the year when a man is expected to talk about the good things that he has done. All the rest of the time he has got to keep quiet about it, and only allow others to talk if they want to; but at the Medicine Lodge a man himself can tell what he has done.

"I wouldn't be surprised if they gave you a name now; maybe to-day. Likely enough some old man—likely some one of my friends will come over before the day is through and want to adopt you and give you a name. How'd you like that?"

"Oh," said Jack, "I'd like that. That would make me feel at home."

"Well," said Hugh, "it won't do you any harm, Come on, it is getting towards sun down, let us go to the lodge."

CHAPTER XIX.

A STRONG TEMPTATION.

As Jack and Hugh walked away from the crowd, Hugh leading the horse, he talked with Jack about all the mysterious performances of the Medicine Lodge, and said how sorry he felt that they had been away when the ceremonies began.

"It's a great religious performance with these people," he said; "kind o' like Christmas, when everybody gives presents and everybody prays, and then the Medicine Lodge women pray for everybody in the camp and for the welfare of the whole tribe. It's a mighty solemn time, I tell you."

They had nearly reached the lodge when Hugh handed the horse's rope to Jack and told him to tie the animal near it.

"I want to stop to speak to Double Runner," he said, and he turned and entered one of the lodges.

Jack went on to John Monroe's and tied the horse to a pin, and then went on beyond, within the circle of the lodges, looking at the paintings on the different ones, and at the bundles tied to tripods that stood behind each. He wondered what the different paintings meant, and thought he would sometime get Hugh, or maybe Joe, to walk around the camp with him and see if they could explain them. As he was thinking

about this, he suddenly heard quickly running footsteps behind him, and turned to see Joe rushing towards him as fast as he could; his hair flying in the wind, and his white teeth disclosed by a broad grin. His arms were stretched forward as if he were about to seize Jack. Jack sprang to one side, but Joe turned quickly and caught him around the body, trying to swing him off his feet, but Jack had the underhold and resisted, and for a moment or two they wrestled there in silence. Then Joe laughed and said, "Can't I throw you?" and gave him a swift twist to the left, but Jack responded only by bending Joe's back toward him as strongly as he could. For a moment the back was stiff, and then, little by little it began to yield, but before this had gone far Joe made a mighty effort, and twisted himself free from the encircling arms, and started off running as hard as he could go. Jack pursued and for some minutes they raced around in and out among the lodges until at last, Joe finding himself before John Monroe's, threw himself on the ground, laughing merrily.

"Ha! my brave one," he said; "you are strong and run fast. I thought I should throw you at once, but I could not." Jack sat down beside him and for some moments nothing was heard except their quick breathing.

"Well," said Joe, "I think you must feel proud of what has happened this day. It was a great thing to be able to stand out in front of all the people and count a coup. I was proud myself to see this thing happen to my friend."

"Well," said Jack, "I was so surprised that I did

not think anything about it, and I didn't know what Hugh was going to do when he dragged me out into the open space. I guess the idea must have come to him all of a sudden; anyhow, he never said a word to me about it, but just got up and took hold of me, pulled me out, and the first thing I knew he was talking. Then I didn't know what he was talking about, but it made me ashamed to be standing with everybody looking at me."

"Well," said Joe. "It's a big thing. It's the biggest thing ever happened to anybody near your age since I have been in the camp. I tell you, if such a thing had happened to me, I wouldn't speak to anybody for a week, I think, I would feel so big.

"And then your having a horse given to you, that made it all the better. He is a nice horse, too, a good riding horse, maybe a buffalo horse."

"Yes," said Jack, "it's a pretty good looking horse. I am going to ask John Monroe about him when I see him."

"Why do you call him John Monroe?" said Joe; "that's his white man's name; but we here all call him Pis'kun; that means buffalo corral."

"Oh, yes," said Jack; "I have heard Hugh tell about how they used to drive the buffalo over the cliff into the pen. I don't suppose they do that any more, do they?"

"No," said Joe, "there's plenty of men in the camp that's helped to do that, but since they got so many guns and such good horses they don't do it no more. Some day likely the camp will stop near one of the old places where they used to jump the buffalo,

and then we can go there and see the piles of stones on the prairie, where the buffalo used to run. And down under the jumping off place you can see yet lots of bones and old horns."

"I'd like to see one of those places," said Jack; "maybe you could dig round in the dirt and find some of the old tools that the Indians used to use."

"Sure," said Joe. "Often they dig up the old stone arrows, and sometimes other tools of stone and bone there, that were left by the old-time people."

"Gracious," said Jack, "I'd like to get some of those things to take back with me when I go home."

"When are you going?" said Joe.

"I don't know," said Jack; "not for a good while yet; not until the autumn comes."

"That's good," said Joe, "we will have plenty of fun first then."

"Oh, yes," said Jack, "I guess so. I expect we will be here a couple of months yet. I haven't spoken to Hugh yet about it."

There was a moment's pause, and presently Joe burst out, and said:

"Say, don't you want to go off on the war path with some young men? There's a war party going to start out pretty soon, and the young men have asked me to go along, and the leader said he'd like to have you go too. He didn't say that until after you had counted your coup."

"Jerusalem," said Jack, "I'd like that. That would be fun," and he looked at Joe with his face beaming with excitement. Suddenly, his look changed, and he said:

"But no, I could not go anyhow. Hugh would never be willing for me to go on a trip like that, and I wouldn't sneak off without speaking to him about it.

"You see, Joe," he went on, "when I came up here, I promised my uncle that I would listen to Hugh about everything, and would take his advice always. It wouldn't be square either to Hugh or to my uncle if I didn't do as I promised I would. Besides that Hugh has been mighty good to me. He has helped me a whole lot and pretty much everything I wanted to do he's said I could. Look at his going off with us the other day when we went to hunt antelope. I don't expect that there was much fun for him in that. I think he went because he thought I wanted to go and wanted to give me pleasure. It wouldn't be the square thing for me to go back on Hugh that way.

"He'd be mighty uneasy all the time I'd be gone. Likely he'd be hunting for me, and what would be lots of fun for me would be giving him a mighty bad time. Besides, suppose anything should happen to me, and I should get hurt or killed, he'd feel mighty mean going back to my uncle and telling him what had happened."

"Well," said Joe, "I guess what you say is right. It would be mean to make White Bull feel that way. I'd like to have you come. We could go and get a lot of horses and come back and people would say we had done well. I wish you could go, but you have got to do what you think is good."

Jack felt badly. He could think of nothing that would be so much fun as to go off with these young

men and make a long journey, and take some horses from the enemy's camp and then return and be praised by all the people, but he knew as well as he knew anything that Hugh would never consent to his going, and he felt that it was impossible to break faith, even for so great a pleasure. He remembered all that Hugh had done for him, and especially how he saved his life at the Musselshell River, and he knew well that the more he thought about it the more firm would be his resolve not to give Hugh this great anxiety.

They talked about it a little longer and at last Joe got up to go and Jack went into the lodge. There he found John Monroe's woman cooking supper, and spoke to her, thanking her for the gift of the horse made to him that afternoon.

"Why," she said, "I was proud that anybody living in my lodge should have done so brave a thing as you did. Many years ago the Assiniboines killed my brother. Since then my heart is always glad when I hear of one of their people being killed."

Jack sat down on his bed and gave himself up to gloomy reflections. What a wonderful time he could have if he were to go off with this war party; how much he could learn of the ways of the Indians in their fighting; what adventures he might perhaps have, and what strange stories he could tell to the people at home when he returned to New York. But there seemed no way in which he could decently go. He determined, at all events, he would speak to Hugh about it, and see what he said.

He had not long to wait, for presently, the curtain

of the door was thrown aside and Hugh entered. When he had seated himself and had filled his pipe, and lighted it by a coal from the fire, Jack said:

"Hugh, I have got something to say to you, something that's troubling me and that I think I ought to tell you. Joe came to me this afternoon, and told me that a war party of young men is going to start out, and they'd like to have me go with them. At first I jumped at the invitation, but then when I thought about it, I felt 'most sure that you would not be willing for me to go, and I told Joe so. Of course, I'd love to go more than anything, but I suppose there's no use thinking about it."

For a moment or two, Hugh said nothing, and then he turned and looked at Jack.

"Well, son, suppose your uncle was here, do you think he'd be willing to have you go?"

"No," said Jack, "I don't believe he would."

"Well," said Hugh, "suppose your father and mother were here, what do you think they'd say about it?"

"Well," said Jack, "I suppose you know as well as I do."

"Yes," said Hugh, "I expect I do, and if you and I both know what your uncle and your father and mother would say about it, we both know what I will say about it."

"Yes," said Jack with a sigh, "I suppose so."

"You see, son," said the old man, "a good many people would have thought it was a mighty big risk for a boy of your age to go travelling across the country the way we done, to an Indian camp to stop

here for two or three months. Of course, there's danger in it; but then there's danger everywhere, and if people have good sense, and keep their wits about them, there ain't no more danger travelling on the prairie, than there is travelling on a railroad train, or going about back in the states. Anyway that's how I look at it, but as I have often told you before, I don't want you to go hunting for danger. I want you to keep as far from it as you can. Now, I told your uncle when he let us come off up here, that I would take as good care of you as I knew how. I have done it and I am going to keep on doing it. You might go off on a war party and never have any trouble at all, and then again you might get killed. I don't want to see you get any nearer to danger than you have to, and I wouldn't let you go to war if I could help it. Now, there's one more thing. I understand just as well as if you'd told me how much you want to go with this party, and what fun you think you'd sure have. 'Course, you could have slipped away out of the camp without saying anything to me, and as likely as not I never would have seen you until you got back again, and of course, while you were gone I should have felt mighty bad, not knowing but what you might get killed. Your speaking to me this way just makes me think more than ever what I have always thought since I first got to know you; that you are square; that when you say you will do a thing you will do it. Now, it ain't every boy of your years that would have had the pluck to say no when a chance of this kind came to him, just because he knew that to say yes, would make a friend feel bad. I understand

pretty well how you felt about it and just what has been going on in your mind, and I won't never forget it. It makes us closer friends than we have ever been yet;" and reaching out his hand, he grasped Jack's in a firm, close grip, that brought the tears to the boy's eyes.

"Never you mind, son," Hugh went on, "we'll have plenty of good times yet while we are in this camp, and we'll keep our words to the people down south and back east that we made promises to. We may have trouble of one sort or another, but we won't give anybody a chance to call us liars."

That night after supper as they were sitting around the fire, Hugh and John Monroe talking, and Jack listening, partly to what they said, and partly to the distant sounds of the camp—the singing, the drumming, the hum of conversation, the laughter and the galloping hoofs—he noticed that some of the singing sounded constantly more distinct, and presently it was directly in front of the lodge. Here two or three songs were sung, and Hugh taking a piece of tobacco from his pocket handed it to the woman who passed it out through the door of the lodge. A moment later Joe's smiling countenance appeared in the doorway, and he said to Jack:

"Come on out, and go round the camp with us."

"Go on," said Hugh to Jack. "They're a lot of young men going round singing in front of the different lodges; maybe it's your war party getting ready to start out."

Jack seized his hat and dived through the doorway, and when he was outside and his eyes had grown

accustomed to the darkness he saw that a group of eight young men stood before the lodge. Joe took him by the arm and said to him:

"We're going round singing in front of the lodges, and sometimes they give us presents. These are the men that are going off to war. You know Bull Calf, and likely before you leave the camp you will know all the rest of them."

In a moment or two, the little group started on, and after passing several of the lodges, stopped before one, where they sang two or three songs. These were plaintive and melancholy to Jack's ear, and yet full of spirit. Of course, he did not know the airs and could not sing, but he listened. He looked about over his strange surroundings and half wondered whether it could be possible that he were standing here with these Indian boys under the brilliant moon and in this circle of white lodges. The music as it was sung thrilled and moved him strangely and it seemed to him as if it must all be a dream.

A little bundle was passed out from this lodge door, and they set out again. Jack whispered to Joe, as they walked along:

"How strange these songs are."

"Yes," said Joe, "they ain't much like white men's songs. These that they are singing now are all camp songs, but there are lots of other kinds. Some of them for war and some of them for dancing, or songs that young fellows sing when they are courting their girls, or songs that they sing when they are praying; lots of different kinds."

"Well," said Jack, "I'd love to know some of

them so that I could sing them when I went back East."

For a long time the young men wandered about through the camp, but at last stopped not far from John Monroe's lodge. There they separated and went to their several homes. Joe walked back with Jack and said good night to him in front of the lodge. When Jack entered he found Hugh and John Monroe still talking. Soon after, they all went to bed and the fire died down.

CHAPTER XX.

WHITE WARRIOR, PIEGAN.

EARLY next morning, Joe put his head in at the lodge door with a look of some importance on his face, and seeing Jack sitting by the fire, beckoned to him and then went out again. Jack followed and joined him a few steps from the lodge, and they walked out away from the circle, toward the prairie. Before they had gone far, Joe said: "Say, Jack, I started out this morning to tell you that I'd made up my mind that I wouldn't go on the war party, but would stay here in the camp. If you can't go, I don't want to go either. I'd rather stop here with you."

"That's good of you, Joe," said Jack, "I'd be mighty lonesome if you were to go off; it's kind of you to give up the trip for me."

"Hold on," said Joe, "I ain't got through yet. As I was coming around this morning to tell you about this, I met Bull Calf, and he says the whole party has been given up. Skunk Bear, he was the leader you know, had a bad dream, and now they're all afraid to go. They're afraid bad luck will happen, so they're none of 'em going."

"How do you mean a bad dream, Joe?" said Jack. "What's that got to do with their going to war?"

"Why," said Joe, "it's got a whole lot to do with it. Don't you know that dreams come to us to tell us

what is going to happen? And if a man dreams that some bad luck is coming, he's got to look out, for if he isn't careful, the bad thing will happen and maybe he'll get killed, or hurt himself, or get sick."

"Well," said Jack, "that seems queer. I never heard of anything like that before. Doing things because dreams tell you to, or not doing them because dreams tell you not to!"

"Well," said Joe, "it's so. You ask any of the old men, they'll tell you. There have been lots of times when men have started off on the war-path, and dreamed they saw themselves wounded, and then have been wounded, and sometimes men have dreamed that they saw one of the party lying dead on the ground, and a little while after, the man that they dreamed about was killed by enemies. I tell you, the Indians depend a whole lot on dreams."

"Well, son," said Hugh to Jack later in the day, "don't you want to try your new horse? Let's saddle up and ride a few miles up the lakes and see what sort of a beast he is. I asked John Monroe about him, and he says he's a running horse, a good buffalo horse or a good pony for war."

"Yes, Hugh," said Jack, "I'd like to try him first-rate."

The two went out and saddled their horses and crossing the river, rode along the trail up the lake. When they came to one of the little open parks they ran a short race, and Jack's horse proved to be very fast. They kept on up the lake for five or six miles, and then, as the mosquitoes were bad, turned about and rode back to the camp.

As they drew up in front of the lodge, Jack saw sitting there, a man, whom at first he took to be very old, but after they had unsaddled and had walked up to him, he saw that he was not such a very old man, but that his hair was white, all except two black locks on the right side. He was extremely tall and very thin. Hugh seemed very glad to see the man and shook hands with him most cordially; then after speaking to him for a few moments, he called Jack to him and said, "Son, I want you to know this man; this is Last Bull. He is one of the best men of the tribe. He is getting old now, but in his time he has been a great warrior. He is not such a very old man as you would think from his white hair, he is one of those gray-haired people such as you see lots of in the tribe, and his hair has always been this colour since he was a little child. I'd like to have you know him well, and I want to have him like you. He is a good man."

Jack shook hands with the man who smiled in a most kindly way, and then turning to Hugh spoke at some length. Hugh looked greatly pleased and said, "Why, son, Last Bull has always been a great friend of mine, and he says that hearing that you had come to the camp with me, and hearing, too, about the good things that you have done since you came, he wants to give you a name; probably it will be some name that he has borne himself when he was a young man. What do you say, would you like to have him do so? If he gives you a name he will always regard himself as your adopted father, and will think a great deal of you."

"Why!" said Jack, "that would be splendid. I

would love to have him do that, and I'd think it a great honour. It would make me feel mighty proud."

When Hugh had interpreted to Last Bull what Jack had said, the Indian seemed pleased. Stepping up to Jack, he took him by the right arm and led him a little way forward, turning him so that his face looked toward the sun, and stretching his own arms upward toward it, and then closing his hands as if grasping the sunlight, he turned again to Jack and rubbed them over his head, his shoulders, and down his arms, and over his body. Then Last Bull made a prayer, which Hugh interpreted to Jack afterward. He said:—

"O Sun, Old Man, Creator, look down. Have pity; have pity. Listen. Look down on this my son and on me. Pity us.

"I am old, but all my life you have looked after me. This, my son, is young, he is just beginning; care for him all through his life. Give to him, always, plenty of all those things that all men desire. Increase his body, so that he may grow strong. Harden his flesh, so that he may always be well. Give him health; give him full life; let him live to great age. Watch him as he journeys to and fro over the country; guard him against all dangers and against all harm. Protect him in battle. Let neither the arrows nor the bullets of the enemy strike his body, or if they must strike it, let them not pierce his flesh, but turn them aside, so that they shall do him no harm. Grant that he may always have good sense, and may act wisely; make his eyes keen to see danger at a distance, and his ears quick to hear the enemies that are creeping

up on him. Let his wisdom be that of the raven, his craft that of the wolf, his sight like the eagles, and his hearing that of the little prairie fox. Give to him the strength of the buffalo bull, so that when he rushes upon his enemies, he will overthrow them as the bull overthrows his.

"Oh Sun, Old Man, Creator, look down. Have pity. Listen. Many years ago, when I was a young man, I went to sleep for power, up on the top of the pinnacle of a high mountain, where all men feared to go. For four days without food or drink, I slept there; for two days and two nights lying on my right side, and for two days and two nights on my left. On the fourth night my dream came to me and said, 'I have heard your prayers and your cryings, and I have taken pity on you, and henceforth I will be with you always, and now I will give you a name. You shall be a great man for fighting, and your name shall be Fighter, and, because, though you are yet young, your head is white, you shall call yourself White Warrior, and when your enemies see your white hair coming towards them, they shall be afraid.'

"My Son, for many years I had this name, but now I am growing old, and I no longer go on the war path. Now I do not need this name, and so, my Son, I give it to you. To me it has been fortunate and I can see that it will be so to you also."

Then Last Bull, again stretching his arms towards the sun, and again seeming to grasp the sunlight in his hands, passed them over Jack's head, and shoulders and body, then he turned away and walked to the lodge and sat down on the ground.

Jack had most curious feelings while this prayer was being made. The man, who was speaking, was so earnest, and so moved by the prayer that he had made, that Jack could not but be moved himself. He felt solemn, as if he were in a big gloomy church and the organ were playing solemn music that thrilled him. When Last Bull turned away from him and walked towards Hugh, Jack picked up his hat from the ground, where he had thrown it, and followed with his head bent down, and feeling as if he had just come out of the church.

Last Bull and Hugh talked together for some time, and Jack sat there and listened, though of course, he understood nothing of what was being said. At length Hugh went into the lodge, and after a few moments came out and handed a package to Last Bull, who presently arose, and after shaking hands again with Jack, stalked off across the camp.

"Gracious! Hugh," said Jack, "I wish you would tell me all about Last Bull and what he did, and what he said, and what you were talking about. I never saw such an interesting person, and it seems as if he must have a wonderful history, if it could only be told."

"Well, son, that's so," said Hugh, "he is a mighty queer man in some ways, but a mighty good man. There isn't an Indian in the camp that I'd rather have take an interest in you, than Last Bull; he is certainly the bravest man in the whole camp. He might easily enough be head chief, but he never would take it. When he was young, all his pleasure was going to war, and in his time he has killed a great many of his enemies. He has also had one big trouble that I

know about and can tell you of. One time, a good many years ago, he was travelling with a party—just a few lodges; they were charged by the enemy and ran, but Last Bull's wife was on a slow horse and while he was trying to fight the enemy off, she was captured. He charged back into the thick of the enemy three or four times to try and rescue her, but couldn't, though his bravery stopped the pursuit, and the enemy drew off on a hill. Some of the attacking party could talk Piegan, and they asked the captive woman who she was. She was brave, too, and she laughed at them and told them that she was the wife of that brave man that had charged back on them so often, and that had killed three of their party. And when the enemy understood that, they pushed the woman out in front of their line, and shot her full of arrows, right there in Last Bull's sight. Last Bull was a young man when that happened, and I often thought, maybe that was one of the reasons why he was always going on the war-path. The people that killed his wife were Snakes, and I've always heard that he cared a great deal more to go on the war-path across the mountains looking for Snake camps, than he did for going to war on the prairie."

"Well," said Jack, "I don't wonder that he was a fighter after that."

"No," said Hugh, "these Indians are great hands to get revenge if they think they have been injured. They always want to get even.

"There was another queer thing happened to Last Bull," said Hugh. "He didn't know about it at the time, but he heard of it afterward, and I expect it must

have made him feel pretty bad. When he was a little fellow, he had a brother two years older than himself, and one time, in a big fight that they had with the Snakes, this older brother was captured by the Snakes and was raised in their camp. Of course that made him a Snake in his feelings, and when he grew up and went to war, he fought with the enemies of the Snakes, and so with the Blackfeet tribes. After Last Bull had become a man and a good warrior, the Snakes and the Piegans one time had a big fight on the prairie. The parties were pretty evenly matched, and it was about a stand-off between the two. The fight was over and the Snakes were slowly drawing off; not running, but just moving off slowly, and the Piegans didn't dare to follow them, but just as they were getting out of range, Last Bull stepped out in front of the line and fired a last shot at the enemy. It was done more for brag than for anything else, but he happened to hit a man and kill him. Two years afterwards, the Snakes and the Piegans made peace for awhile, and then the Snakes told them that the man that was killed by that last shot was Last Bull's brother. Of course, Last Bull didn't know that his brother was in the fight, and in fact, never had known anything about him except that he had been captured by the Snakes; but I expect, likely, it made the old man feel pretty bad."

"I should think so," said Jack.

That afternoon, John Monroe told Hugh that he was going to give a feast that night, and was going to invite a number of the principal men of the camp to eat and smoke with him. He told Hugh, that although

Jack was only a boy, he wanted him to sit in the circle with the feasters. And when Hugh heard this, he said to John, "Look here, John, why don't you ask Blood Man to come too? Jack will feel pretty lonely sitting there with a lot of old men and not understanding anything that's said, and with nobody to talk to; if you ask the other boy it will be a heap pleasanter for Jack, and I don't reckon the old men will mind it if you explain to them why you did it." John said that he thought that this would be good, and told Hugh that he would call Joe to the feast.

Jack was very much interested to hear what was going to take place, and greatly pleased to know that Joe was coming too, for he knew that if Joe sat by him he would at least get the general drift of what was said by the old men when they made their speeches, after eating.

All through the afternoon John's wife and her two sisters were busy cooking food. Bread was baked from flour which came from Hugh's supply, and he also provided enough coffee and sugar to make coffee for the guests. Besides this, the women boiled and cooked great kettles of antelope meat, and of dried buffalo tongues, and of back fat, as well as other kettles of sarvis berries. A little before sundown, all was ready, and John, going out in front of the camp, called out the names of the various guests, sometimes repeating the invitation over and over: "Last Bull, you are asked to eat. Last Bull, you are asked to eat. Last Bull, you are asked to eat; and you will smoke." In this way he called out names of fifteen of the important men of the camp, and not very long afterward the

guests were seen approaching from different parts of the camp. John Monroe sat at the back of the lodge, with Hugh at his left hand and Jack and Joe on his right. The others, as they came in, had their seats pointed out to them by the host; the more important men sitting furthest back in the lodge, while the younger ones were nearer the door. It took some little time for the whole party to assemble, but when all were there, the women, at a sign from the host, passed around, first the dishes and cups, and then the food.

The dishes were a curious mixture of the ancient and the modern. There were some tin plates and spoons, but most of the dishes were great bowls hollowed out of wood, though two or three were made of strips split from the buffalo horn, and sewed together with sinew. Such dishes, though serviceable enough for holding meat, of course, leaked and could not be used for anything that was fluid.

Little was said until the meal was over. Occasionally a man chatted in a low voice with his neighbour, or some more loudly spoken jest was uttered, at which all laughed. Jack was surprised to see that the host was not served with food. He did not eat anything, but occupied his time during the meal by cutting up tobacco on a board in front of him, and mixing it preparatory to filling the great stone pipe, which was to be smoked after all had finished eating. As the dishes were cleared away by the watchful women, Pis'kun pushed the tobacco and the pipe over to Joe, and made a sign to him. The boy cleaned out the pipe, filled it, and passing it back to the host, reached over, and with a pair of tongs made from a forked twig,

drew from the fire a coal which he placed on the pipe. The host smoked until the pipe was well going, then blew a puff of smoke to the sky, turned the stem toward the earth, and made a low voiced prayer. Then he handed the pipe to the man on his left, who, without smoking, passed it to the next one, and so from hand to hand it passed along until it reached the guest nearest the door. He smoked as the host had done, made a prayer, passed the pipe back to the man on his right, who in turn smoked, and so the pipe passed round the circle, until it reached the host again.

Soon after the pipe had passed him, the oldest man present, Calf Robe, rose to his feet and spoke for some little time. When he had finished, Joe whispered to Jack that the man had been praising John Monroe, and had also spoken of Hugh's return to the tribe, and of the young man that he had brought with him. Calf Robe's speech was followed by others, and Jack waited for Joe to tell him what they were talking about; but, although he nudged Joe two or three times to try to get him to look at him, Joe seemed to be so much interested in the speeches, that he paid no attention to Jack, who sat there, altogether in the dark as to what was going on. Presently another one of the elder men, whom Jack recognised as Iron Shirt, the head chief, stood up and said a few words, and then, to Jack's surprise, Hugh turned to him and said, "Son, Iron Shirt wants me to interpret to you what he is going to say." Then Iron Shirt went on, speaking slowly, a sentence at a time, and waiting until Hugh had interpreted it to Jack, and this was the speech he made:

"My Son, you have come here from a far country with this white man, who is our old friend, White Bull. We have known him for many years. He tells us that you have come from the edge of the world, from where the earth runs down to meet the salt water. He has told us about you, that you are a good young man, true, speaking only the things that are, and neither talking foolishly nor falsely. Before you had come into our camp, but while you were yet in sight of it, you did a brave thing and saved from death the child of one of those sitting here. Since you have been with us, we have watched you in the camp. We have seen that you are quiet and orderly, and we have found too that you are brave. A few nights ago, when our people, with whom you were camped, were attacked by enemies, you defended them and killed one of these enemies. I am glad that so good a person has come to stay with us, and all the camp are glad too. I should like to have you stay with us always, and become one of my children. Sitting about you to-night there are chief men of the camp and we all of us wish to have you become a Piegan, and to be in fact, what I think you are in your heart, one of our people. Therefore, now this day, although your skin is white, we have chosen you one of us, and from this time you belong to the tribe of the Piegans. What I say to you now, I do not say for myself alone, but I say it for these who are sitting here, and also for the whole tribe."

The old man ceased speaking and sat down. Jack had grown red and white alternately, as he had heard Hugh's interpretation, and his feelings were so strong,

that for a moment he had almost felt like crying. He turned to Hugh and said:

"What shall I do, Hugh? Shall I say anything?"

"Why," said Hugh, "I expect they'd like to have you say something, even if it is only a little, in answer."

It was the first time that Jack had ever spoken in public, and as he stood upon his feet, his knees shook, and his tongue seemed dry. All he could say was, "Hugh, I wish you would tell them how proud I feel to have them talk as they have talked, and how glad I am to be a member of the tribe. Tell them I'll never forget this night, if I live to be a thousand years, and that when I go back East, wherever I may be, I'll always think of the members of the Piegan tribe as my friends and my brothers."

Jack sat down with his ears ringing from the effort that he had made, and overwhelmed with shyness and embarrassment. At the same time his heart swelled with pride at the honour that had been done him and he squeezed Joe's hand, which had sought his, with a fervent clasp. Soon after this, the guests rose, one by one and filed out of the lodge, and the last to go was Joe, who, dragging Jack with him, rushed out of the lodge, and standing in front of it, gave vent to a series of shrill whoops and yells, and then he and Jack, throwing their arms about each other, wrestled in the darkness until both were exhausted.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CAMP MOVES.

It was two or three days after the conclusion of the ceremonies of the Medicine Lodge, when Jack, walking through the camp one morning, found himself face to face with Hezekiah. The negro had discarded the feather which he wore in his head when Jack had seen him last, and he was now clad in leggings, a much worn cotton shirt and moccasins. He knew Jack at once and came up to him, shaking his hand most cordially.

"Well," said he, "Master Jack, you got here all right, didn't you? Hope you didn't have no trouble on your way up. Didn't get captured by nobody else, did you?"

"No," said Jack, laughing, "we got pretty well scared after you left us, and came near running onto two or three Indian camps, but we got around them without being discovered and had no trouble at all. Hugh was saying," he went on, "that you Piegans would be mighty sorry you hadn't stayed with us, when we were travelling around among those camps, south of the Yellowstone. We didn't want anything of the people, but Hugh said that the war party would have given anything to have had such a chance to take horses."

"Bad luck," said Hezekiah, "we didn't see no

enemies, and didn't make no war and just came trailing in yesterday afternoon not having done nothing at all. I hear, though, that you done yourself mighty proud, Master Jack. The Indians were telling me last night that you killed an enemy that was trying to take horses from Fox Eye's camp, over to Grassy Lakes, and that after you killed him you counted coup on him. That was fine thing for you to have done, and all your friends are proud of you.

"I don't know whether you know it, Master Jack, but you've got lots of friends in this camp; people here think a whole lot of you. First they like you because you kinder belong to the old man, and then, because you saved Little Plume's daughter from getting drownded, and now, because you have shown that you're brave, even if you are so young and haven't been long on the prairie."

"Well, Hezekiah, I am mighty glad to hear you say that. I expect anybody is glad if people like him, I know I am. Everybody in the camp is always kind and pleasant and smiling, they don't seem like the Indians I have always read about. Those were always solemn and silent and gruff, and didn't do anything but grunt; but those people here are just as pleasant as they can be and always laughing and joking, and doing kind things: I tell you they are as nice people as I ever want to be with."

"Oh yes, they're good people, Master Jack," said Hezekiah, "I like 'em right well. Master Jack," he went on, "would you mind coming over to my lodge? I'd like to have you see my wife and my babies. I've got a nice family, sir! My wife, she is old Lone

Person's girl; he is a chief of one of the bands, you know; quite a great man."

"Why, sure, I'll go, Hezekiah," said Jack; and the two walked over to a large lodge not far off.

Jack found Hezekiah's wife a neat pleasant-faced young woman, and the lodge was kept in very good order. Three odd little children, perfect negroes in appearance, were playing about close at hand, and a tiny baby with great rolling eyes and tightly curling hair, was strapped to a board and swinging to one of the lodge poles.

After some conversation, Hezekiah hinted somewhat diffidently, that he would be glad if Jack would eat with them, and Jack was very ready to accept the invitation, which seemed to please both Hezekiah and his wife. Jack passed a good part of the afternoon in the lodge, and when at last he left it, made up his mind that he would try to see something of Hezekiah in the future.

One afternoon, not very long after the Medicine Lodge was over, Jack was sitting in front of the lodge with Hugh, when he heard the distant voice of the camp crier shouting out the news, as he rode about the circle of the lodges. He listened for a while, and as the man drew nearer and the sounds which he uttered grew more distinct, Jack turned to Hugh and asked him what the old man was saying.

"Hold on a minute," said Hugh, "wait till he gets closter, I can't just hear all he says, but it is something about moving the camp, and buffalo. I guess likely they are going to start." Presently, he added, "Yes, this is what he says: 'Listen, listen, everybody

pay attention. To-morrow the camp will move. All the lodges must be taken down early. Everybody must pack up soon after sunrise. The camp will move toward the Sweet Grass Hills. You men, get your horses close. You women, pack up your things to-night, the chiefs have ordered to start early. Listen, listen, everybody pay attention.'"

"Well," said Jack, "I am glad they are going. We have been here a long time now, and I'll be glad to get out on the prairie again, and glad to see the Indians chase buffalo. They'll do that, won't they, Hugh, when they get into the buffalo country?"

"Lord, yes," said Hugh, "that's the only way they kill buffalo, except now and then when they find one or two old bulls off by themselves, when they sometimes creep up to one, and kill him that way; but whenever they want to make a big killing, to get meat and lodge skins for everybody, then they chase 'em."

"Well, Hugh," said Jack, "how shall we do when the camp moves? Just pack our animals and travel along with them?"

"Yes," said Hugh, "I guess we may as well pack our animals, and then we'll let the old man's women drive them. They'd be glad to pack them too, but I'm afraid if they did, that first thing we knew, some of them horses would get a sore back, and I don't want that to happen. You see, likely as not, we've got to travel down South with these horses again, and I mean to keep them in good order, so that they'll serve us while going, just as they did when we came up here."

"Why," said Jack, "it doesn't seem to me as if we

ought to let the women pack the horses, that's man's work. Ain't it, Hugh?"

"No," said Hugh, "not among Indians. Man's work, in an Indian camp, is to kill meat for food, and skins for clothing, and to go to war, so's to get rich and to make people think well of himself and his family, and to defend the camp. The woman's work is to look out for the lodge, to take care of the children, to make the clothing and to see to the moving of the camp. It ain't so very different, you see, from what it is among white folks. Take it among Indians, a man's business is hunting, and going to war. White men hunt for fun, but Indians don't. Indians hunt, so that they can live, just the same as any man in the States goes to his store in the morning, and sells things all day so as to earn money to support his family."

"Why no," said Jack, "it ain't so very different from what the white man and the white woman do. Is it?"

"Not very," said Hugh. "Now, I'll tell you, son," he went on, "let's pack up' most all our truck to-night, and get the packs ready to put on the horses in the morning. Our horses will be driven in with the old man's, and we can catch them and pack them, and leave them here for the women to drive on with theirs, and then we can either go ahead with the soldiers, or if you like, you can stop in the camp, and see them take down everything and begin to move."

"I think I'd rather stay here and see them move, Hugh," said Jack. "But what do you mean by the soldiers?"

"Why, the soldiers," said Hugh, "are sort of constables like. I thought I'd told you about them. They're young men that are going to war all the time, and they're the ones that see that the orders given by the chiefs are obeyed. It is like this; if there was any man to-morrow morning, who said he was not going to move, and whose lodge was not taken down, the soldiers would go to him and if he were obstinate, just as like as not they'd give him a good licking with their quirts. If he still refused to go with the camp, they might tear down his lodge, break the lodge poles and even cut the lodge-skins to pieces. It is a pretty serious matter you see, to disobey the chief's orders, and really, 'tisn't ever done."

After supper that night, Joe came to the lodge, and after a little talk said to Jack, "Isn't this great, that we are going to move and going to chase buffalo?"

"You bet it is great," said Jack. "You know I've never seen a buffalo chase, and I've always thought it must be a fine thing to see."

"I tell you," said Joe; "after they kill plenty of buffalo, everybody is glad. All through the camp they put up the drying scaffolds, and as the meat is brought in, they cut it into thin slices and hang it over the poles, and for a little while it looks as if red cloth was stretched all through the camp. Of course, after two or three hours, it gets dry and brown, but when it is first put up, it is real pretty I tell you."

"Well," said Jack, "I hope I'll see that. You can't think, Joe, how much I want to find out everything about the Indians. Everything that they do, and say, and think, is so different from anything I've ever seen

before, that it just makes me pretty near crazy when I think what a chance I've got here, and how little I've learned yet."

"Oh well," said Joe, "you'll know a heap before you go away, but I don't want you to know everything, because, then maybe you'd never come back. Suppose you go away this Fall, not knowing everything, maybe you'll come back next Spring to learn the rest."

"Well," said Jack, "I can't think of any better fun than to do just that." After a minute he went on, "You've killed buffalo, Joe?"

"Yes," said Joe, "a few, not many. I haven't got a good running horse, and so I never killed many chasing them. It takes a pretty good horse to catch a cow. You've got two."

"Well," said Jack, "I'll tell you what I'll do, the first chase we have, I'll let you ride my new horse, and I'll ride Pawnee; then maybe we'll both have good luck."

"That'll be good," said Joe. "Suppose I ride that new horse, I'm pretty sure to have good luck."

"Look here, son," broke in Hugh, who had been sitting near them, "you'll want to have a lesson in buffalo running before you try it the first time. There's some things that a greenhorn has got to be told. Now, when you start to chase buffalo, you must ride right up close to the animal you are trying to kill. You'll never kill any buffalo if you are afraid of them. Ride right up within two or three yards of a cow, and when you are about even with her hips, shoot at her, and try to hit her in the heart. You must remember

what I've told you so many times, that you have got to shoot low down to kill any animal, but at a buffalo, with its big hump, you've got to shoot lower down than most anything else. That's the great trouble most men have when they hunt buffalo the first time, they shoot too high, and the ball goes through the meat and don't hurt the buffalo a bit. If you'll remember those two things, to get up close, and to shoot low down, you won't have any trouble about killing your buffalo."

The next morning when Jack looked out of the lodge, a great change had come over the camp. Many places, where lodges had stood the night before, were now vacant. In other places only the conical frame work of poles was seen, and in others the women were just pulling away the lodge skins, or in some cases were standing on a travois which leaned against the lodge, and were unpinning its front. The camp was full of horses, many of them tied to pins or bundles of baggage, or to travois, but many others were roaming loose through the circle. Jack had never before seen all the horses of the camp gathered together, and was astonished at their numbers. All about the circle were piles of robes, bundles, saddles, cooking utensils, and other property which the women were gathering together, tying up, packing on the horses, or loading on the travois.

The scene was one of great activity, and the work that was being done was not conducted in silence. There were colts that had lost their mothers and were screaming shrilly, and mares were neighing for their missing colts. The camp dogs were in a state of high

excitement, and were barking or howling, or got in people's way, and when kicked out of it, yelped dolefully. The little boys, who swarmed through the circle, were shouting, whooping, running races and wrestling. The women, worried by the labour of packing and of looking after their children and their horses, called to each other with high pitched voices, and many of the babies missing their mother's attention, added their cries to the babel which prevailed.

Jack watched the scene for a little while, and then going back into the lodge, said, "Well, Hugh, I never expected to hear so much noise in this camp as there is this morning. Will they ever quiet down again? This isn't very much like the camp we have been in for the last three weeks."

"No," said Hugh, "the first day that camp is broken after a long stop in any one place, they make quite a racket. You'll see, though, that when they move to-morrow, things will go a good deal more smoothly. Now, as soon as we've finished eating," he went on, "let's catch up our horses and pack them, and tie them up here with old John's. Then I'm going on ahead with the old men, and if you want to, you can stop here as long as you like; only, if I were you, I wouldn't wander away from the column very much. You see, now we are going out on to the prairie, where there is more danger of meeting enemies, and I wouldn't go off alone at all. Get Joe to go with you, or go with some little party of two or three men, or ask me and I'll ride with you wherever you want me to."

"All right," said Jack, "I'll remember. I've seen

enemies enough for a little while, and I don't want to run onto any more of 'em."

It did not take them long to catch and pack their horses. Jack tied up his new riding-horse with the pack-animals, and John Monroe's wife said that she would see that they were all driven on. Then Hugh started off to join the head of the column which had already begun to cross the river, while Jack mounted Pawnee, and rode about through the camp. It was very amusing to him to watch the various operations that were going on. Women were constantly completing the work of packing and starting off with their families, to follow those who had gone on before, so that there was a continuous stream of people heading toward the river, entering it, crossing and clambering out on the other side. The trail climbed a steep bluff there, and the long line of people that followed it, made Jack think of a brightly coloured serpent slowly making its way up the hillside.

At last he tired of the scenes of the camp, and riding to the river, joined the procession that was crossing it. Once on the other side, he turned Pawnee out of the trail, and rode on rapidly toward the head of the column where he joined Hugh. Twenty-five or thirty old and middle-aged men were in the lead, and behind them rode more than a hundred young men on fine horses, handsomely dressed, and well armed. A few of them carried rifles; many others double-barrel shot-guns, but a great many were provided only with bows and arrows which they now carried in cases on their backs.

"Oh! Hugh," said Jack, as he rode up, "are these young men here the soldiers?"

"Yes," said Hugh, "they're the soldiers. They all belong to one of the secret societies, the Mŭt'siks, that means brave. As I was saying to you last night, if the chiefs want anything done they tell these young fellows to have it done. There's quite a long story about these different secret societies, and some night when we have plenty of time, we'll have to get some of the old men to tell us these stories. You see, usually, they don't talk much about these things to white folks, but I've heard 'most all the stories, and likely they wouldn't mind telling them to you. You see, one reason an Indian don't like to talk about sacred things to white men, is, that he's afraid the white man will laugh at him, but of course they know you wouldn't do that any more than I would."

"I should think not," said Jack, "I'd be so pleased to hear anything that they were willing to tell me, that I don't think I'd laugh at it even if it were real funny."

"No," said Hugh, "of course you oughtn't to. Of course, some of these things that the Indians believe sound ridiculous to us white folks, but they're mighty real to them, and they believe in them just as we believe in a whole lot of things that likely would sound mighty ridiculous to them. Some of them bible stories for example. You couldn't get an Indian to believe them, and yet white folks think it's all so."

"You mean the miracles?" said Jack.

"Yes, I expect that's it."

After a little pause Jack asked Hugh, "What are those men doing that I see crossing the hills ahead of us, Hugh?"

"Why," said Hugh, "those are young men and boys that are out hunting through the brush to kill anything that's there before the camp gets along, and scares everything. We're likely to stop before we've gone much further, and to wait for the column to close up. Then those young fellows will get quite a-ways ahead. Of course, they'll kill any game that they might come across, and then too, they will scout the country for any enemies that might be about."

Hugh had hardly stopped speaking, when the old men drew in their horses, and dismounting, sat down in a circle on the ground, and the soldiers too got off their horses and the people behind them stopped. Pipes were filled and were passed from hand to hand. "What are they waiting for, Hugh?" said Jack.

"Why, you see, son," said the old man, "there's always a lot of people that are late leaving the camp, and they have stopped here to let such people catch up, so that the column won't be scattered out too far. Sometimes it happens if they straggle too much, that a little war party may dash down onto the column, and kill two or three women and then ride off again before anybody can get near enough to punish them."

After half an hour's rest, the march was taken up again and before long, the last hill was climbed, and the camp moved forward along an open ridge that led toward the prairie. From time to time the trail passed through scattering patches of aspen or through a point of pine timber running down from the mountains, but by the middle of the afternoon, they had left the mountains well behind them, and a little later, they camped in the open valley of a branch of the

Milk River. It surprised Jack to see how speedily the lodges were erected and how short a time it took this unorganized mob of people to settle down into the ordinary routine of camp life.

For several days the village moved eastward, crossing the Milk River, and at last, one night, they camped near the base of the Sweet Grass Hills. Ever since leaving the mountains, buffalo had been in sight. At first only an occasional individual, then small groups of three or four bulls, later little herds. But here, at the base of the Sweet Grass Hills, they were abundant, and from an elevation the prairie was seen to be dotted with them, almost as far as the eye could reach. On the march a few buffalo had been killed by men who had stolen up to them quietly; but no one had chased buffalo, for the chiefs had given strict orders against it.

CHAPTER XXII.

RUNNING BUFFALO.

JUST before sundown one evening, as Jack and Hugh sat in front of the lodge, the now familiar voice of the old crier was heard shouting the news to the camp. At first the words uttered at a great distance had no meaning, but as the old man drew nearer, Hugh nodded his head as he listened, and Jack asked, "What is he saying, Hugh?"

"He is calling out the orders of the chiefs," said Hugh, "and this is what he says: 'Listen, listen, everybody pay attention. To-morrow we will chase buffalo. All must get in their horses. Men whet your arrow-points, women sharpen your knives. To-morrow morning early, everybody will start out. So the chiefs have ordered.' That's just about what he says and he rides about the camp repeating this over and over again. You see, it is necessary that everybody should know just what is going to be done, so that all may get ready, and every person in the camp may have an equal chance to get food to-morrow."

"Oh!" said Jack, "there go the boys and men now to gather in the horses." For he had seen young men and boys on foot, starting for the hills, which in all directions from the camp, were dotted with the feeding Indian ponies.

"Yes," said Hugh, "and as you are the youngest person in this lodge, you might as well get on your horse and go out and bring in ours. What horse are you going to ride to-morrow, Pawnee or your new runner?"

"Why, I think I'll ride Pawnee," said Jack, "as this is going to be my first chase. I know him and he knows me, and until I get a little bit used to running buffalo, I thought I'd use him."

"Well," said Hugh, "I expect that's what you'd better do. But if I was you, I'd bring in the new horse too and tie him up close to the lodge. You don't want to leave a fast horse like that out on the prairie, nights, for most any time, you know, a little war party might come along, and take a lot of the horses that are in the hills, and it would be a pity to lose a running horse."

"I'll remember that, Hugh," said Jack, "but I thought anyhow, I'd bring the new horse in to-night, and lend him to Joe to-morrow. You see, he hasn't got any good horse, and he was telling me that he had never yet killed many buffalo in a chase, because he had to ride slow old horses that couldn't catch buffalo."

"Good idea," said Hugh, "it'll give him a lot of pleasure, and maybe get him some credit, and it won't do you no harm."

It was dark before the horses had been brought in, and picketed close to the lodge, and yet the hum of unusual bustle pervaded the camp. As they sat about the fire in the lodge, just before going to bed, Hugh said to Jack, "You see, son, how the very noises in

the camp show that something unusual is happening. You notice to-night there is no singing and no drumming, but the people are talking more than usual and more horses are moving around through the camp, and people too. Everybody is getting ready. Now, if you could go around and look into the lodges, you'd see that in a good many of them men are praying. Some of them have got out their sacred things and they're burning sweet grass and sweet pine and purifying themselves, and praying to the Sun to give them good luck to-morrow; to let their horses run fast, so that they can catch the fattest of the cows; not to let them stumble or step into holes, so that there will be no falling, and to make their arrows go straight, so that they shall kill plenty of food. You see, it is kind o' hard for us white folks to understand what a buffalo chase means to the Indians. These buffalo are just about all they've got to live on, and if the buffalo should be taken away, all the people would starve to death. The most important thing for every man, woman and child in the camp, is to have plenty of food. So when these people start in to chase buffalo, they pray hard for good luck.

"I mind when I was a kid, back in the States," he went on, "that we used to have prayers, sort o' like this; only there, we called it Thanksgiving. The preacher used to thank the Lord for all the good that had come during the past year, and to pray for all the good the Lord would let us have next year. What they talked about there was, big crops, lots of corn and pumpkins and a good mast year, so that the hogs would be fat, and plenty of rain to make the grass

grow, so that the critters would have lots of feed. Lots of times my old mother has took me to such preachings, and I used to sit there on the bench next to her, with my little legs not half reaching to the ground, and listen to what the preacher said."

"Oh yes, Hugh, of course I have been to church on Thanksgiving Day lots of times, but I think in New York the minister preaches about what has gone before more than about what is to come next year."

It was still dark next morning when the crackling of the fire roused Jack from his slumbers, and in a few moments after he had thrown off the robe which was his covering, he was outside the lodge looking up into the clear black sky, which sparkled with thousands of brilliant stars. The camp was awake, and through the covering of each lodge, Jack could see the glimmer of fires, and from every smoke-hole, sparks flew upward. While the men were eating breakfast, the smiling face of Joe showed itself in the doorway, and he entered and sat down by Jack.

"Hello, Joe," said his friend, "did you bring your saddle? I've got the new horse tied out here and he's all ready for you to ride to-day in the chase."

"Oh!" said Joe, "I don't need no saddle, I'm going to ride bareback same as all the other Indians do. It is only white men that use saddles, and now you are a Piegan, you'll have to learn to hunt buffalo as the Piegans do."

"All right," said Jack, "that'll suit me too well, but I guess until I've been through one or two chases, I'll stick to the old-fashioned saddle. It seems to me a man has got to have a whole lot of practice before

he can ride a day bareback. I used to try it sometimes down on the ranch, and I'll tell you it didn't take me long to get tired."

"Yes," said Joe, "you've sure got to practice." And Hugh added, "And the sooner you start in to do it the better. You ought to learn to ride bareback, and you ought to learn to use the bow and arrows. You can use that Assinaboine's bow and arrows that you captured. That's a right good bow, but you'll need some more arrows. We'll try to get some after we get back."

"Oh, Hugh!" said Jack, "are you going with us?"

"I reckon I'll have to," said Hugh. "You see, we've got to kill some meat for the old woman here. We're stopping in the lodge and eating her food right along, and we've got to hunt and kill our share. I expect likely you'll kill a plenty to-day, but anyhow, I thought I'd go along too."

"That's fine," said Jack, "I wish we could ride together, but I guess Pawnee will run away from old Baldy."

"I guess likely he will," said Hugh with a twinkle of fun in his eye, "but maybe when you see the horse I'm going to ride to-day, you'll think Pawnee has his work cut out for him."

"Why," said Jack, "what horse are you going to ride?"

"Never you mind," said Hugh; "you'll see after a while."

When they went out of the lodge, the dim light in the eastern sky showed that the day was about to break. At one end of the camp there was a continuous tramp-

ling of hoofs, which Hugh said was caused by the hunters beginning to leave the camp. Jack hurried to Pawnee and put the saddle on him, and Joe brought up the new horse, naked except for a thong knotted about his lower jaw, and stood by its right side ready to mount. When Pawnee was saddled, Jack looked around for Hugh, but he was nowhere to be seen.

"Come on," said Joe, "let's go over to where the hunters are gathering; Hugh told me that we should go on and that he would join us there."

"The boys mounted and galloped to the end of the camp, joined a throng of men and boys, who, passing across the valley, climbed the bluffs, and on the upper prairie stopped with the crowd that was waiting there. Most of the men were sitting on the ground holding the ropes of their horses which fed close to them. Out toward the prairie sat a line of twenty men, and Jack noticed that no one passed these men. All the hunters stayed between them and the stream.

"Why don't they start, Joe?" he said.

"They can't," said Joe, "until the soldiers tell 'em to go. You see those men sitting there on the outside of the crowd, they are the soldiers, and everybody has to do just what they say. If a man gets in front of them they drive him back right off, and if he don't go when he is told, three or four of them will take their quirts and give him a mighty good licking."

"What's the sense of that," said Jack. "If I want to go ahead, why can't I?"

"Well," said Joe, "you see if everybody could start off when he wanted to, and began to chase buf-

falo, the first few men would scare them, and they'd begin to run, and the men that came after might not get any chance to kill. You see some people are riding fast horses, and some people slow ones, and the soldiers try to keep everybody back until the time comes for the charge, so that every man will have nearly the same chance."

"Well," said Jack, "that does seem fair."

"Yes," said Joe, "I expect it is the way to get the most meat, and of course, that's what we are trying to do; to kill all the food possible. A good deal of it will be eaten fresh, and all the rest will be dried and eaten when the buffalo are scarce."

As they were talking thus, a man came swiftly trotting up to them, riding a beautiful white horse with black spots, and as he drew near them, Jack saw that it was Hugh.

"What do you think of this horse, son?" said Hugh.

"Why, he's a beauty," said Jack. "What an awful queer colour, but what a splendid horse he looks like."

"Yes," said Hugh, "old Last Bull, when he heard that I was going to run buffalo to-day, offered me this horse to ride. They say he's fast, and one of the best buffalo horses in the tribe."

"Well," said Jack, "if horses count for anything, seems to me that we three ought to kill a lot of buffalo to-day."

"Yes," said Hugh, "I expect we ought to, but come, let's get on up toward the front, I see the soldiers are beginning to get on their horses."

Almost as he spoke, the young men began to mount and as they did so, all the other hunters sprang on

their horses and crowded up close behind the line of the soldiers. By this time it was plain daylight, though the sun had not yet risen. Jack looked up and down the line of the hunters, with the greatest interest. To his surprise, he saw that almost all of them were naked, and wore nothing but their moccasins and their bow cases and quivers slung on their backs. Here and there were men who rode on curious saddles, which looked like soft pillows of buckskin, astride of which the man sat, a little ridge rising in front of and behind him. Many of the men were not mounted, but ran along beside their horses with an arm stretched across the withers or back of the animal. Here and there would be seen two men mounted on a single horse, and leading two naked horses, which would thus be fresh when the time came to make the charge on the buffalo. To Jack's great surprise, very few of the men carried guns, and bow and arrow seemed to be almost the universal weapon.

The soldiers had started on a brisk trot with an even front, and the crowd of hunters pressed close behind them. Running his eye up and down over the company, Jack tried to estimate how many men were there, but he could form no idea. He called out the question to Hugh, who was riding close beside him, but Hugh shook his head as if he didn't know. Little by little the pace increased, and soon the horses were going at a brisk gallop. Before long, as they approached the top of a hill, one of the soldiers who rode in the middle of the line, raised his hand, and at once the whole company halted. Two of the soldiers then dismounted and crept up to the top of the ridge.

and after looking over, returned, mounted again, and calling out some words, all set forward at a smart gallop. As they paused over the crest, Jack saw before them, a wide level plain on which were feeding a great herd of buffalo. Again he tried to estimate how many there were, but he couldn't tell whether there were a thousand or five thousand.

The mounted men swept down the hill at a good run, yet each man was obliged to hold in his horse in order to keep it back of the line of the soldiers. At first the buffalo did not appear to notice the hunters, but as they drew nearer and nearer, some of the great beasts began to raise their heads and look, and then to turn about and run toward the herd; and in a moment all the animals had taken the alarm, and, throwing down their heads and raising their tails, were racing off over the prairie. Just before they started, the chief soldier gave a shrill yell, and at this signal, each man pressed forward as rapidly as he could. There was no longer order or discipline, but every rider did his utmost to get among the buffalo.

At the signal Jack had loosened Pawnee's reins, and pressed his heels against the horse's side, and a splendid race began. There were only half a dozen men in front of Jack, and before they had gone very far, he could see that he was over-hauling most of these, but he could also see that Hugh on his right and Joe on his left were holding their own with him. These three horses seemed to be nearly the swiftest of all. Little by little they drew up on the heels of the herd and in a few moments were riding in a cloud of dust and flying gravel thrown up by the feet of the buffalo. Through

this dust Jack could now see the huge forms not more than twenty or thirty yards ahead of him. He threw a cartridge into his gun to be ready to shoot, and presently, when he was within five or six yards of the nearest bull, fired, and to his great delight the beast fell. As he loaded his gun again, he heard a shout from Hugh, but couldn't understand what he said. He shot again, and another buffalo fell and then from out of the dust by which he was surrounded, Hugh rode up close to him and called out, "Don't bother with these bulls, push on ahead and kill cows."

This advice rather dampened Jack's spirit, for he remembered now, how much talk he had heard about killing cows, and here he had been wasting cartridges on the bulls, which as he had been told, always brought up the rear of the herd. He threw his gun into the hollow of his arm and spurred Pawnee, and before long the bulls had been left behind, and he was riding across a part of the plain where there were scarcely any buffalo, but before him he could see a dark mass rising and falling, which he was sure must be the cows. Hugh had drawn away from him and a little ahead, and was now close on the heels of the herd. Pawnee, too, was rapidly drawing up to them, but before he had got among them, Jack heard Hugh shoot twice. A moment later, Jack was galloping along surrounded by buffalo, which drew away from him on either side and ahead, but still were so close to him, that it made him feel a little bit nervous. Over the billowing brown backs of the buffalo, he could see, dimly, other riders who went in silence, but often

leaned down from the backs of their steeds and pulled the bow to the arrow's head. Jack shot again and again, but no buffalo fell. After two more ineffective shots, he began to wonder what was the matter; then suddenly it flashed across him that he was excited and was shooting without using care and taking aim. He remembered what Hugh had said about the importance of shooting low, and he realised that the excitement of the chase and the crowd of cows all about had made him forget the care that he should have exercised. His next shot was a careful one at a great cow running along just before him, and swinging her huge head from side to side; at the shot she went down, and so did the next one he shot at and the next. Then Jack noticed that most of the buffalo had disappeared. There were still half a dozen running near him, but these were turning off in one direction and another. He noticed, too, that Pawnee was running more slowly than he had been, and he made up his mind that he would stop. He had done well enough and he did not want to overtax his horse.

As he drew rein and Pawnee slackened his pace, at first to a gallop and then to a trot and a walk, he had an opportunity to look about him. In many directions, in front and on both sides, he could see scattering bunches of buffalo climbing the hills; some of them were still pursued by Indians, and looking back over the plain he could see many brown dots which he supposed were carcasses lying there, and many Indians riding hither and thither in confusion. A few buffalo were to be seen standing about, and near each were one or two riders.

At a little distance to his right he recognised Hugh, who was trotting toward him. When he came up, Hugh said to him, "Well, son, you done pretty well after all. You kind of lost your nerve one while though, didn't you?"

"Why yes, Hugh," said Jack, "I did. I couldn't hit anything. But where were you? I didn't see you."

"Oh well," said Hugh, "I wasn't so far off but I could see what was going on. I saw, though, that you caught yourself after a while and killed two or three cows. I expect likely, them you wounded has all been killed before now, but let's ride back and see if we can pick out the buffalo we killed."

They started back and Jack pointed out what he thought were the three cows that he killed, and Hugh examined the wounds and said that Jack was right. Crossing a little gully through which flowed a tiny stream, which in the excitement of the run, Jack had wholly failed to notice, Hugh pointed to a low clump of bushes to their right, and said, "Ride over and kill that cow, son." Jack then saw, standing among the bushes, a buffalo cow evidently wounded, and riding over near to her, was about to dismount, when Hugh said, "Hold on, shoot from the saddle, don't never get on the ground near a wounded cow; if she were to make a charge, she might scare your horse and if he ran off you wouldn't have a good time dodging the cow." Jack shot from the saddle and the cow fell, and when they went up to her, they found that her previous wound was made by a rifle ball, so that she was undoubtedly one of those that Jack had shot at.

As they passed on over the plain where the buffalo

lay, they saw many men at work butchering, and before they had come to the last of the dead buffalo, a long line of women with their travois, their children and their dogs had reached the killing ground, and begun the work of carrying the meat and hides to camp.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE WOUNDING OF FOX EYE.

THE days passed pleasantly and quickly. Everybody in the camp was busy, every one was happy. On the drying scaffolds among the lodges, hung the wide sheets of bright red meat and of white back fat, which slowly turned brown in the dry wind and under the burning sun. And as this dried meat was removed and packed away, other fresh meat took its place, to be in turn removed. All day long women were busy over hides stretched out upon the ground, removing the flesh and fat and hair, and preparing them for lodge-skins. Then presently, new lodges, fresh and white under the sunlight, began to take the place of those that age and use had turned gray and brown. The dogs, which a few weeks before had been gaunt, lean and hungry looking, were now fat and sleek. They no longer spent their time on the prairie hunting little birds and ground squirrels, but gorged with fresh buffalo meat, lay about in the sun and slept, except when disturbed by malicious children who enjoyed creeping up to an unsuspecting or sleeping animal, and beating it with a great stick.

From time to time the camp moved a little way. Buffalo were plenty everywhere. Many were killed and their flesh and skins brought into the camp. One

night after a chase, as Jack and Joe were walking about through the camp, a man and a little boy rode up to a lodge close to them. The man's horse was loaded with meat, but on that ridden by the boy, there was only a small pack, wrapped up in the hide of a calf. A woman took the ropes of both horses, but the man, instead of going into his lodge, turned about and called out a short speech in a loud voice. Joe pulled Jack's arm and said, "Let's stop and watch; that's Boss Ribs Hunter. His boy has just killed a calf. It is the first time the little fellow ever hunted, and his father is giving away a horse."

"How do you mean, Joe," said Jack.

"Why, you see," said Joe, "the boy has killed a calf and as he's only a little fellow, it's a pretty big thing for him, and his father wants to show how glad he is by making a present, so he called out and told Last Coyote to come and see what his boy had done. Last Coyote is old and poor. He hasn't any relations and I don't believe he's even got a horse. It is a pretty brave thing of Boss Ribs Hunter to do, to give him a horse, because he knows that he never can expect Last Coyote to give him one. Sometimes you know, a man will give away a horse to a rich person, and then before very long, this rich person will feel that he's either got to give a horse back again, or some other good present. But when anybody gives a present to a poor man, it shows that he has a strong heart." While he was saying this, an old man in a very much worn robe had come out of a lodge not far off, and had walked up to Boss Ribs Hunter. He spoke to the man, pointing first to his little boy and

then to the horse with the small pack of meat on it, and presently, without a word, the old man clambered onto the horse's back, and rode away through the camp singing as he went.

"Now," said Joe, "you'll see that old man will ride all around through the camp, and will tell everybody what that little boy has done, and that Boss Ribs Hunter gave him this horse because he came to see what the boy had done. In that way, everybody in the camp will come to know that the boy has done well, and that Boss Ribs Hunter has a good heart."

A few days after this, the young men, who had been sent out to look for buffalo, reported that they had moved, and that there were few now on the prairie. The chiefs, therefore, gave orders that the camp should be moved north to Milk River, in the hope that on that stream buffalo would be found. The morning when the camp moved, Hugh and Fox Eye, with Jack and Joe, rode away early ahead of the camp and a little to one side of the line of march, to examine the country.

The sun had but just risen when they started, and the air was cool and delightful. The grass of the prairie, which had long before turned yellow, was covered with a white frost, and the insects, which all through the summer had been enjoying life, were stiff with the cold and unable to move. Near a great butte, on the vertical sides of which could be seen the mud homes of many cliff swallows, Jack was surprised to see a great number of these birds on the ground, and when he came to the place and they had flown away, he could see that they had been feeding on some very

small beetles, with which the ground was fairly strewn. From a shelf on the side of this butte, as they were passing along, a great lanner falcon swooped down to the prairie close before them, and rose again with a squeaking ground squirrel in his talons, and when it returned to the shelf, was saluted by the whistling cries of two full-grown young, perched there. The time for singing birds had passed, and already the different broods of the little prairie sparrows and the white-winged black birds, were beginning to get together in small flocks. But the meadow-larks, more cheery than their fellows, still whistled with mellow call from sage brush and boulder on either hand. Now and then a coyote barked at the riders from the top of a near-by hill, and perhaps a jack-rabbit sprang from the grass and galloped off, or a badger waddled slowly to one side and disappeared in his hole. Hugh and Fox Eye rode side by side ahead, and the two boys followed.

As the men rode along, they talked, and this was the report of their conversation, which Hugh afterward gave to Jack. "My friend," said Fox Eye, "I have something to tell you. If you were like other white men I should not say it to you, but you are like our own people and I can tell you what is in my mind. This morning I do not feel well, I am afraid. I think something is going to happen; something bad. This is why I think so. Last night my dream came to me while I was asleep, and spoke to me saying, 'My friend, this day you will be in great danger. It may be that you will lose your body. Look out carefully then, and try to see that nothing bad happens; for I

tell you that danger is close to you, although I cannot see what it is, nor how it will come.' After my dream had spoken thus, I awoke and the woman was just beginning to build the fire. Ever since then I have thought of this. It troubles me. This morning I could not eat. I do not know what this means, but I know that something bad is likely to happen.

"Well," said Hugh, "I think that you ought to do just what your dream tells you. You must look out carefully, do not go far away, nor into any place where enemies may be hidden. Do not, to-day, run your horse even if they should chase buffalo; it might be that your horse would step into a hole and throw you and hurt you, or a cow might catch you and kill you. Travel quietly wherever you go, and if the day passes without anything happening, then you may feel that by listening to the words of your dream, you have escaped this danger."

"I take your words," said Fox Eye, "you speak well. But I should like to know what this danger is, that is likely to come. It does not seem as if it could be any of the things that you speak of. The prairie is bare of buffalo; they will not chase them. Our young men have travelled far in these days, and no signs of enemies have been seen."

"Well," said Hugh, "you can't tell. Often danger comes from the places that seem least likely, and of course, if enemies should let us know they were coming, before they made the attack, there would not be much danger from them."

"It is true, it is true;" said Fox Eye.

For some hours they travelled on and at length

climbed a high butte, from which, Fox Eye had told them, that the Milk River could be seen. He was right. Far away to the northward was the winding green line where the sluggish stream flowed, showing, now and then, a larger patch of green, which marked the growth of a bunch of willows or other shrubs. From this point, too, they could see that there were here, some buffalo; not many, but near them a few scattering bulls, while toward the river the black dots were thicker on the prairie. Looking back over the country they had traversed, they could see, miles away, the dark winding line, which showed where the camp was coming. After a time they started on, and as the sun began to fall toward the west, they saw from time to time, quite near them, a few bulls. One of these was lying on a broken hillside not far from the course they were to follow, and as they approached it, Fox Eye said to Hugh, "I think I will go and kill that bull. My lodge has no fresh meat and I can kill this animal without going far. You go on, and I will kill it and bring some of the meat, and soon overtake you." Presently they passed out of sight of the distant bull, and soon Fox Eye left them, and rode off toward it, while the others went on their way. After a little they heard a distant report of the gun, and Hugh, turning to Jack, said, "Well, I guess the old man got him." Before they had gone very far, however, they heard very faintly, two reports, almost together, and then a third, and Hugh, wheeling his horse, shouted, "Come on, boys, Fox Eye has been attacked;" and in a moment all three were riding as hard as they could, back toward where

the bull had been seen. The distance was not great, but to Jack and Joe it seemed as if their horses had never gone so slowly. In a very few minutes, however, they crossed a ridge from which they could see the bull lying on the hillside, and near it, another large animal, but nothing was seen of Fox Eye. A very few minutes more brought them close to the bull, and then they could see that the other animal was Fox Eye's horse lying dead, and a moment later Fox Eye, himself, raised his head from behind the bull's body. As they stopped by him, he spoke to Hugh and said, "You see that the words of my dream came true, friend;" and as he struggled to his feet, they saw that he was wounded in the leg, and was bleeding badly.

Hugh quickly dismounted and looked at the wound, which had been made by a big trade ball that had passed through the fleshy part of the thigh, fortunately without breaking the bone or cutting any important blood vessel.

"Well," said Hugh, "we must fix you up, friend, you are bleeding badly."

"Yes," said Fox Eye, "I was surprised. I did not listen to the words spoken to me in sleep, and have acted foolishly, but first ride to the top of the hill and see where these enemies have gone, I saw three of them and there may be more."

"That's a pretty good idea," said Hugh, "scatter out, boys, and let's go up to the top of the hill. Joe, you take Fox Eye's gun and go to the North; son, you go to the South, and I'll go up in the middle; I guess those fellows saw us coming in plenty of time and have skinned out."

Well spread out, the three rode to the top of the hill and looked carefully over. There, a long way off, galloping over the prairie as hard as they could to the East, were seen three horsemen. They were too far off to be overtaken, and a little search along the hillside showed that there were no more enemies there.

They returned to Fox Eye, and as well as they could, with handkerchiefs and with pieces torn from their shirts, they bandaged his wounds. His horse was dead, and Joe put its saddle on the animal he had been riding, and prepared to go forward on foot.

"This is how it happened," said Fox Eye, when Hugh asked him to tell the story of the attack. "I had left my horse behind and crept up close to the bull, and when I shot, it didn't get up; it just died there. Then I went back for my beast and bringing it up to the bull, I began to cut out some meat. I was busy, and I think didn't keep a good look-out, though every moment or two, as I thought, I looked about me, and then the first thing I knew I heard two shots and felt that I was hurt, and saw my horse fall. They had shot him for fear that I should run away. As I fell, I saw the three men running down to strike me, and I raised myself on one elbow, and when they were pretty near, I fired, and the first man fell. I think the others thought I had a double-barrel gun, for they separated and ran back and hid. I was charging my gun as quickly as I could, but it took me a long time to get the ball down, then I quickly crept in between the legs of the bull and used its body for a breastwork. When I looked again, I saw that the

man I had shot had disappeared. I think he was only wounded.

"I wondered whether you would hear the shots and come back, and I wondered whether the three men would charge on me again. I could see their heads every little while, as they looked over the hill and I thought that they would charge; but pretty soon they started up the ridge, two of them helping the man that was hurt, and then they disappeared, and soon I heard you coming."

While Fox Eye had been talking, the other three had cut out the buffalo's tongue and taken the meat from his hump, and had put it on Hugh's horse. Hugh and Jack went back up the hill to the point where the man shot by Fox Eye had fallen. There they found blood on the grass and a trail of blood leading down a little sag to a ravine, where the man had crossed. Here there was more blood and moccasin tracks in the sand, which led up the hill. They returned to Fox Eye, who was then helped into the saddle, and Hugh and Jack mounted, and with Joe on foot, the four started down the hill. Before they had gone very far, they came in sight of the moving column, which by this time had quite overtaken them.

When they had come close enough to the camp for the people to get an idea of what had happened, a number of men rode out to meet them, and in a moment, as it seemed, the news had spread through the marching column, that enemies had been seen, and one of the people wounded. The four were at once surrounded by men, anxious for the news, and the shrieks and cries of women who did not know how great the mis-

fortune might have been, resounded in their ears. Thirty or forty soldiers rode away hotly, to visit the scene of the encounter, and if possible to overtake the enemies. Fox Eye was put on a travois and the village started on again and camped that night on Milk River.

The camp on Milk River was a pleasant one, though there was but little wood for the fires; a few small box-elder trees and a good deal of willow brush furnished the only fuel. The stream rippled pleasantly over the rocks which formed its bed, and Hugh told Jack that this was almost the only place on the course of the stream, away from the mountains, where the bottom was hard.

The next day the camp remained here, and young men scouted north of the river, looking for buffalo. A few were seen, but not enough to justify a general hunt, and Hugh expressed the opinion, that within a day or two the camp would move south to one of the streams flowing into the Marias River.

A number of the young men, who had ridden away the night before in pursuit of the enemy, had not yet returned, and Jack asked Hugh, during the morning, whether he thought that they would overtake the Indians who had attacked Fox Eye.

"No," said Hugh, "I don't reckon they will Those Indians had a big start, and likely they saw the camp coming and knew that they would be pursued, and have ridden clean out of the country. Of course it might be such a thing as the man that Fox Eye wounded would die, and the other two might hide his body somewhere, but I don't believe that these

young men that have followed them, will see anything at all of the Indians."

"I would like to have gone off with those fellows," said Jack.

"Yes," said Hugh, "I knew you wanted to, but there would have been no sense in doing it; you'd just have had a long, hard ride, and maybe broken down your horse, all for nothing. I have seen young men start off like that more than fifty times I bet, and they hardly ever come back with anything to show for the trouble they've had."

Toward the middle of the day, the soldiers who had started off the afternoon before, began to come into the camp, stringing along one after another, on tired, stumbling ponies. They reported that nothing had been seen of the enemy, although they had ridden hard in the direction they had taken, following the trail until after dark.

"There," said Hugh to Jack, "what did I tell you? You see they've just had a wild goose chase, and haven't done anything at all. Now I'll tell you what we'll do. You and Joe and me'll go out this afternoon, just before sundown, and you and Joe take your bows and arrows, and we'll see if we can't kill a bull."

Some time before this, Hugh had traded with one of the young men of the camp, for a number of arrows, and Jack had been practicing with the Assinaboine's bow and with these new arrows for some time, so that he was now a pretty fair shot. When he had first obtained the bow, Joe had made him some blunt-headed arrows, and the two boys, going out on the

prairie near the camp, had practised shooting until Jack was fairly skillful, although, of course, he could not approach Joe in marksmanship. His efforts to learn how to shoot had been a source of great delight to the small boys of the camp, who enjoyed following him about, laughing at his bad shooting, and then exhibiting to him their own skill.

The accuracy with which these little shavers could use the bow was a constant source of astonishment to Jack. They would watch him shoot at his mark a few times, hailing each miss with derisive yells, and then some naked little fellow, not half his height, would rush up to him, gesticulating and pointing, and then, seemingly without effort or aim, would plant three or four arrows in quick succession, in the very mark that Jack had been missing.

At first their comments and their company greatly embarrassed and disconcerted Jack, but he soon became accustomed to both, and rather enjoyed the society of the noisy little throng.

Jack had also practised riding bareback, both on Pawnee and his new horse, and had reached a point where, clad in moccasins and leggings, he could gallop for half a day without feeling undue fatigue. Hugh had advised him to begin on one of the buffalo running saddles, used by some of the Indians; a square cushion of buckskin, stuffed with buffalo or antelope hair, but without stirrups. Beginning with this, he had gradually passed on to riding the naked horse, and now had a firm grip with knee and calf, on the smooth sides of his mount.

Toward evening that day, the three started out and

galloped swiftly up the river, gradually turning into the low hills on its south side. They had gone only three or four miles, when Hugh held up his hand and bending low in the saddle, called their attention to a buffalo, whose back was just visible over a near ridge. "Now, boys," he said, "we can get up within fifty or seventy-five yards of that fellow, and then you can try him. As soon as the bull starts, son, you want to put the quirt on your horse and get up to him as quickly as you can, then shoot at him just as you would if you were using a rifle, except that you want to ride up nearly to his shoulders, before shooting. Let the arrow go in square between the ribs and not slant forward. When you are too far behind, the arrow is likely to strike a rib and just stick in his hide. I expect Jack will get the first shot," he added, turning to Joe, "because he's got the best horse, but I don't feel noways certain that he'll kill, and you must do your best to get the buffalo, if he don't."

They trotted briskly up to the top of the ridge, and were on the crest and within thirty yards of the game, before it saw them; then it dashed off, but in a very short time, Jack was close to the animal's side, and drawing the arrow to its head, he let fly. It was the first time he had shot from a galloping horse, and he did not allow for the motion, so that to his horror and shame, he missed the buffalo clean, the arrow striking deep into the ground under its belly. As the bow twanged, his horse made a lurch to the right and he lost his balance, and would have fallen off if he had not caught the mane, and thus recovered himself. Joe, on his slower horse, was bounding along close behind the

buffalo, but gaining on it very slowly, and Jack turning again, passed Joe and once more drew up beside the bull. This time his luck was better, the arrow struck the beast just behind the foreleg and low down. When the horse turned, Jack was ready for him and did not lose his seat, but the prick of the arrow angered the buffalo, which turned sharply and would have caught his horse, if it had not sheered off just as it did. This little delay enabled Joe to come up, and he planted an arrow in the buffalo's side close to Jack's. The animal charged Joe as he had Jack, but the horse easily avoided him. But now the bull was badly wounded and angry, and stopped to fight. Hugh had come up, and the three sat on their horses, fifteen or twenty yards away from the great beast, which with head down and tail stuck stiffly up in the air, glared furiously at them from under the heavy mat of brown hair, which overshadowed its little eyes. Now and then it shook its head angrily, and its long beard swept the prairie grass; but blood was flowing from its mouth and nostrils, and both Hugh and Joe said it would soon fall. By this time Jack had seen plenty of buffalo, but as he sat there and looked at this enormous beast, it seemed to him that he had never beheld any creature so terrifying.

The buffalo stood there for a few moments, ready to fight, then slowly turned as if to run, tottered a few steps and fell on its knees.

"Well," said Hugh, "I guess, son, you and Joe will have to divide that buffalo; 'pears to me from the way those arrows look, that you both killed it."

"Well," said Jack, "the first shot I made, I didn't

hit it at all. I would not have thought I could shoot at an enormous animal like that, at five or six yards distance, and miss it, but I did miss it clean. I'm going back after we have butchered, to try and find that arrow."

The buffalo was a young bull, fat and in good order. They took his tongue and the meat from the boss ribs, and packing it on Joe's horse, set out for the camp again. On the way back they spent some little time looking for Jack's arrow, which was finally found, sticking almost straight up in the sand.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A MYSTERY OF THE PRAIRIE.

TWO or three days after Fox Eye's accident, the camp moved again, back to the little creek near the Sweet Grass Hills, which they had left only a few days before. Here there were but few buffalo, and another move was made, still further south, to a stream running into the Marias River. After two or three short moves down this creek, buffalo were again found plenty, and several successful chases were made. As the indications seemed to be that the buffalo were more plenty east of the Marias, the camp turned in that direction and moved on toward the Missouri River.

By this time, great stores of food had been accumulated by the Indians. In every lodge were piled up parfleches of choice dried meat and back fat and tongues. Many sacks of pemmican had been made, and Jack greatly enjoyed seeing the old women at work, preparing this food. Every evening there was feasting in the camp. Men invited their friends to eat with them. Young people held dances, sometimes some of the societies held their dances. Everybody was good natured, laughing, happy.

Hugh and Jack were often invited to feast by some of Hugh's friends, and always accepted; and usually their hosts, perhaps on the suggestion of Hugh, or perhaps of Pis'kun Monroe, invited Joe to these feasts,

as company for Jack. So it was that Joe, who under ordinary circumstances would have been treated only as a boy who had never done anything, and was as yet of no importance, came, through Jack's friendship, to be regarded as a young man of promise, and to stand in the public estimation, very high among the young men of the camp. Joe understood perfectly, why it was that he received this consideration, and sometimes used to talk to Jack about it, and to tell him that if it had not been for Hugh and himself, none of these honours, that he was now receiving, would have come to him.

Hugh, Jack and Joe took part in all the buffalo chases that were made, and on one of these, Jack rode his new horse and carried only his bow and arrows and his knife. On this chase he killed four cows which were afterwards identified by the private mark which his arrows bore, as did those of every other man in the camp. In this chase he let Joe ride Pawnee, and Joe killed six cows, for of course he was much more accustomed to the use of the bow, than was Jack. Often during these days, Jack and Joe rode out together, both bareback, and carrying their bows and several times coming upon single buffalo, they succeeded in killing them and bringing them into the camp. Several times, too, they came upon little herds of buffalo feeding or lying on the prairie, in places where it was possible to creep up very close to them, and Jack, who by this time had killed enough buffalo so that the novelty had worn off, persuaded Joe to creep up near the great beasts, and to lie there and watch them.

This was an amusement in which at first Joe

scarcely sympathized. To him a buffalo was only so much food, and yet after they had done this once or twice, and had spent hours watching old cows lying there, chewing their cud while the yellow calves played about them, or at other times, slowly feeding along some little sag between two hills, or again, steadily travelling along with ponderous tread and swinging heads and beards sweeping the ground, Joe became as much interested in the study of the ways of these great beasts as was his white companion. Often mingled with a little group of buffalo would be a herd of antelope, feeding perfectly at home with their huge companions, and perhaps, if these started to walk in any direction, keeping along with them as if a part of the herd. Once a group of buffalo and antelope passed so close to the boys, lying on the hilltop, that Jack distinctly saw the nostrils of the nearest antelope move and twitch as it walked by, while the great bull near which it was, looked to the boy almost like a mountain.

One day, when the camp was near the Missouri River, Jack and Joe had ridden out, Jack carrying his rifle and Joe his bow, over to where the Bad Lands break away above the river. Far below them they could see the stream winding about among the yellow verdureless bluffs, which were gashed in all directions with ravines and canyons, and showed a curious mingling of colours of red and gray and green and brown and yellow. Near where they sat on their horses, a long point of level prairie stretched out toward the stream, and Jack proposed that they leave their horses in the hollow near where they were, and should

walk out to the edge of the prairie and look over. He wanted to get as nearly above the stream as he could. He did not realise that several miles of broken Bad Lands lay between the point of prairie and the river.

They walked out to the point and stood there looking down. The strange scene had a fascination for Jack, who had never seen Bad Lands on so great a scale as this. As he sat there looking at the scene and wondering, Joe rose to his feet and walking a few yards southwards, looked over the bluff there, and then turning, called in a low voice to Jack. When he came up and followed Joe's glance, he saw down below them on the bluff, a single buffalo slowly working its way up the steep hillside, evidently coming from the river below. The height of the bluff was great, and the buffalo seemed to find it a hard climb. He would stick his toes into the soil and scramble half a dozen yards and then stop to rest. Then he would ascend a few yards more and again stop.

The boys lay on the edge of the bank and watched the bull slowly clamber toward them, and at length it reached the prairie only a few yards from where they were, and stopping with a grunt, stood there panting. They lay perfectly still and watched it, both feeling a little nervous as to which way the bull might turn. Joe whispered to Jack, "Look out, my friend, do not move, lie perfectly still. If he sees us he may rush upon us and kill us." For several moments they lay there and watched, and at last the buffalo slowly moved away and disappeared over a low hill. Then they sat up, and Jack said to Joe, "Well, I'm mighty glad he's gone, I tell you, he looked to me big and

terrible. Of course, I suppose I might have killed him if he had turned toward us, but I was mighty glad when I saw him go the other way. Weren't you, Joe?"

"You bet I was," said Joe. "I was scared. Of course if he had come toward us you might have killed him, but I couldn't have done anything with my arrows; if he had come straight at us I'd have had to jump right over the side of the bluff."

"Yes," said Jack, "I expect that's all we could have done. I guess we could have dodged him there, but I'm glad we didn't have to try it."

The boys rose to their feet and went to the place where the buffalo had come up on the prairie, and looking down over the almost vertical cliff, they wondered how such a great and heavy beast could ever have climbed up.

"I tell you," said Jack, "they must be strong. Just think of that big animal climbing up the steep face of that bluff. I should have thought he'd have fallen over backward and rolled down every time he tried to take a step. It's wonderful."

"Oh!" said Joe, "I tell you a buffalo is a great, powerful beast. He's strong and he never gets tired, and he's big, and then besides all that he has got mysterious power. Maybe you don't believe that, but all the old men will tell you it's so."

"Well," said Jack, "I've heard something about that from Hugh, but of course I don't know anything except what I've been told; but Hugh says that all the Indians believe the buffalo has this power."

"Well," said Joe, "it's so; he has."

They set out to return to their horses, walking along over the prairie near where it broke off into the deep ravines running toward the river. As they were crossing one of the little side gullies that ran into one of these, Jack's eye was caught by an odd sparkle in the sand on the floor of the ravine, and looking a second time, he saw something that did not shine quite like a bit of gravel. He stepped toward it and saw sticking out of the sand in the wash, a bit of yellow metal, and stooping down, pulled from the soil what he took at first to be a used cartridge shell. In a moment he saw that it was not this, and calling Joe to him, said, "What can this be, Joe? I thought it was an old cartridge shell, but it isn't, it looks like a little brass whistle with the mouth part gone. You see this hole through the metal at the bottom, there has been a string through that to hold it by." Joe looked at the piece of metal which was a short tube closed at one end, and with a projection at that end, which, as Jack said, had a hole in it and had evidently served to tie the tube to something. "Why," said he, "that's a powder charger. I never saw one made of brass before, but I've seen lots made of horn and tin and copper. You fill this charger with powder from your horn, and empty it into your gun; that's the way you measure the charge."

"Oh yes," said Jack, "I've heard of that, but I never saw one before, but look here," he added, "here is something scratched on it. What is it?" And he rubbed the dust away with his finger and polished the metal on his sleeve. "Why! it's 'B. L.,' those must be the initials of the man who owned it; but I won-

der how it came to be here. I suppose the man was hunting or travelling about, and the string broke and he lost it, and then finally it got washed into the gulch here."

"Yes," said Joe, "most likely that was it."

Jack put the charger in his pocket, and they went on; but hardly had they come out of the gully, when Joe stopped, and stooping down took hold of something at his feet. "Hold on, Jack," he said, "here is something more," and turning, Jack saw Joe stooping over an old piece of leather lying on the prairie. Joe took hold of the the leather to lift it, but when he pulled at it, it slipped through his fingers. "Why, it's stuck fast," he said; and taking a hold of it again, he held it tighter and pulled, and the leather began to tear, and as it tore, some particles that looked like yellow gravel, escaped from the rent, and slipped down on the prairie.

"That's queer," said Jack, and both boys went down on their knees beside it. Jack picked up some of the grains that had escaped, and looked at them. They were very heavy and looked like dull brass. Poking his fingers through the rent in the leather, Joe felt about and poked out a lot more of the gravel, while Jack kept gathering it up in his hand and looking at it. Suddenly Jack's jaw dropped, and he looked at Joe with wide open eyes, while a frightened expression came on his face. "Joe," he said in a whisper, "do you know, I believe this is gold."

"You're crazy;" said Joe. "You must be very crazy. Who would leave gold lying out here on the prairie? I never heard of anything like that."

"But, Joe," said Jack, "feel how heavy it is, it must be gold. Nobody would carry brass around in a buckskin package and leave it here on the prairie any more than they would gold. Somebody must have been travelling here and lost this off his horse. This must be worth a lot of money. Now let's gather it up carefully and take it into camp and show it to Hugh, and see what he says. He'll know, dead sure."

The boys did not know how to get this on their horses without losing any of it. Evidently this old buckskin sack had lain there so long, that it was rotten and would not hold together. With their knives they dug carefully about the sack and as they dug, they found that it was in part buried in the soil, so that there was more of it below the surface of the prairie than above. Jack took off his hat and placed in it all the grains that they could gather up, and then digging deeply around the sack, they at length got below it.

"Now, Joe," said Jack, "there's only one thing to do that I can think of, to carry this stuff in the camp. We've got to have something that's strong and something that has no holes in it, so that none of the dust can get out; and the only thing of that kind that we have with us, is one of your leggings. Take off your leggings and we'll tie up the end of one of them and slip this bag and the dirt into the other end, and then tie that up and we can put it across a horse."

They did this, but it was not easy to do. In the first place the lump of dirt which held the sack was large, heavy and very frail, so that when they tried to

lift it, it looked as if it would break in two. Instead of lifting it therefore, they put the legging down on the ground, and while they lifted the lump of earth little by little, they slipped the side of the legging under it, until the whole mass was within the buckskin covering. Then they tied each end of the legging firmly with buckskin strings, and started to put it on the horse. It was very heavy. Joe said it weighed as much as half a sack of flour, that is, fifty pounds.

Both boys were in a high state of excitement and talked to each other in whispers, and kept looking guiltily over their shoulders in all directions, as if they were committing some crime. No doubt their notion was, that some one else might appear on the scene and lay claim to a portion of this treasure that they had found. Presently they mounted and set out for the camp, Jack keeping one hand behind him on the precious bundle that was tied behind his saddle, while Joe rode with his horse's head at Jack's knee, and kept his eyes fixed on the load.

"How much do you suppose there is, Joe?" said Jack.

"Why, I don't know," said Joe; "must be a hundred dollars worth of it, if it's gold."

"A hundred dollars! Pooh, Joe, you don't know anything," was the reply. "You said it weighed fifty pounds, and if it weighs as much as that, there must be thousands of dollars worth."

"My!" said Joe, "is there as much as that? I know what I'll do."

"What?" said Jack.

"I'll get me a good gun," replied Joe, "that's

all I want, a good gun, and maybe a good buffalo horse."

"Why," said Jack, "if that's gold you can buy yourself all the guns and all the horses you want, and a lodge for yourself and still have plenty left."

"What'll you do, Jack, with yours?" said Joe.

"Oh, I don't know," said Jack, "I'd like to buy a lot of nice furs and robes to take home, but I expect we've got trade stuff enough to buy those things with, maybe I'll just take it home as it is. But hold on," he said, as a sudden thought struck him. "This doesn't belong to me; this is yours, you found it."

"No I didn't," said Joe, "we both found it together, and anyhow if you hadn't been along, I'd have just left it there; I wouldn't have carried a lot of yellow sand into the camp. I never saw anything like this before, and I'd a-thought it was just some kind of queer gravel. We have been partners right along, almost since you came into the camp, and we've got to be partners now."

"Well," said Jack, "we'll see what Hugh says about it. After all maybe it isn't anything. I've heard my uncle talk about fool's gold, and one day when we were coming up, I picked up a piece of yellow heavy stuff like this and asked Hugh what it was, and he told me some queer name that I can't remember, and then said some folks called it fool's gold, and he cracked it on the axe and it broke into little pieces. It looked something like this stuff we've got only the edges were sharp and not round like this, and it was bright and shiny too, and not dull, the way this is."

"Oh, I hope that this *is* gold, it will be great."

When they reached camp, they unsaddled and carefully carried their bundle into Pis'kun's lodge. Hugh was not there, but the boys were too impatient to wait for him long, and after a few moments, Jack left Joe on guard over the bundle, while he started out through the camp to find Hugh. Soon he came upon him, sitting in the shade of the lodges, smoking and talking with Last Bull and another old man, and going up to him with an air of much mystery, he asked him if he wouldn't come to the lodge. Hugh rose and accompanied him, looking at him meanwhile, with an expression of amused curiosity, for the boy was evidently big with some secret which he was anxious to reveal.

When they were seated in the lodge, the boys began to untie their bundle, and while doing so, told Hugh the story of their find. As they talked, his interest increased, and before the contents of the legging had been turned out into the pan borrowed from Pis'kun's wife, he was as much excited as the boys themselves. The legging was lifted up and slowly the mass of dirt mingled with yellow grains slipped out into the pan, and the moment that Hugh saw it he said, "By the Lord, boys, you've surely struck it." He took up one of the larger grains, bit it, tried it with his knife and then whispered impressively, "It's gold." For an hour or two all three were busy cleaning the grass, the soil and bits of rotten buckskin from among the yellow grains, which half filled the pan. When this was done, Hugh lifted it from the ground, and after weighing it carefully in his hand, said, "Boys, there must be twenty-five pounds of this dust. I wouldn't be sur-

prised if there was five or six thousand dollars right here in that pan."

"My," said Jack, "that's an awful lot of money."

"Yes," said Hugh, "that's a lot of money. But how did it get there? That's what I want to know. We will have to go there to-morrow and look the ground over right carefully; somebody must have dropped that sack there, right on the prairie. Didn't you see nothing else there?"

"No," said Jack, "nothing; it was just lying there half covered up by the dirt and the grass, and Joe walked right over it before he saw it."

"Hold on, Jack," said Joe, "show White Bull that powder charger."

"That's so," said Jack, and he fished the tube out of his pocket.

Hugh looked at it carefully from all sides and pondered. After he had thought a little while, he said, "Look here boys, this is queer. I have seen that powder charger before, and I know the man that made it. 'B. L.,' that's Baptiste Lajeunesse, he was one of the old time trappers and I was in Benton when he made that charger. That's gold too. It was more than thirty years ago. Bat had just come in from the mountains with a big lot of furs, and sold them and got his money, and had started out to have a good time. Just before he got into the Post though, he had lost his charger. It was one, made him long before, out of a piece of mountain sheep's horn, by a great friend, and he thought the world of it. He kept talking all the time about that charger, and when he began to spend his money and to drink, he talked

about it more and more. Now, Bat was a pretty handy man with tools, and when he was a boy, he had been blacksmith at the Hudson Bay Co., and that afternoon, when he was pretty drunk, as he was going along the street, he suddenly stopped and ran into the blacksmith shop and took a hammer and fished a twenty dollar gold piece out of his pocket, and began to hammer it out on the anvil, and before any of us knew what he was after, he had made himself this charger and scratched his initials on it, and tied it with a string to his shirt in front, where he used to carry his old charger when he was in town. A few days after that, after Bat had spent all his money, he started off again into the mountains, and I have never seen him from that day to this.

"Now it would be mighty curious," the old man went on, "if there was any connection between that charger and this sack of dust. I don't see how there could be, and I don't see how we are likely to find out anything about it; but anyhow, we'll go back there to-morrow and see."

Hugh covered the pan of gold with some robes, and told Jack and Joe to remain in the lodge while he went out. Half an hour later, he returned with a heavy double sack of buckskin into which the gold was poured, and this sack was put in a partly empty sack of flour, the flour being packed around the gold and on top of it, so that there seemed to be nothing but flour in the sack, which was then placed under the other property belonging to Hugh and Jack, between their beds.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE RELIC OF A FIGHT.

THE next morning the three started back to the place where the boys had found the gold. On their way there, Jack explained to Hugh in greater detail, that the dust had really been discovered by Joe, and asked him to whom, in his opinion, it belonged.

"Why," said Hugh, "you two boys are just like a couple of fellows that start out to prospect. You are partners, and whatever either partner finds, belongs to both, share and share alike. It would have been the same if you had found it instead of Joe, half of it would have belonged to him. Now here I'm going out with you this morning, if any of us would find anything to-day, I oughtn't to have as big a share of it as either of you two, because you found the place and are taking me there and showing it to me. I am more like a man that you have hired to work on your claim and so I only get what you choose to give me. You and Joe are the bosses, I'm the hired man."

"Seems to me," said Joe, "that White Bull ought to share in what we found yesterday. Because you see Jack and me didn't know what we'd found and we had to take it to somebody and ask, and maybe if we had taken it to some one else, he'd have cheated us out of it all, so I think we ought to divide that gold into three parts, and all three share it."

"Why, yes," said Jack, "that's the best yet."

"No," said Hugh, "I guess we won't do that, you boys will have to keep your gold, and if we find any more to-day, why, maybe I'll get a chance at it, but what you found is yours and nobody else's."

"Well, but say, White Bull, you know we've got to be asking questions all the time and got to be told what to do with the dust, for neither of us know enough to get along without help. I think you ought to take your share."

"So do I," said Jack, "and I vote that unless Hugh comes in as a partner, you and I say we won't take any of this gold."

"Well, well," said Hugh, "we ain't got no chance to spend that money now, and we needn't decide right off about this. We can't do nothing with it until we get into the settlements, but when we get there, we better get paper for it, unless Joe would rather have the coin.

"Speaking of coin," he went on. "Did I ever tell you that story about Young Dog's father?"

"No. What was that, Hugh?" asked Jack.

"Why," said Hugh, "a good many years, I don't know how long, nor just where it was, Young Dog's father and some of his young men were off on the war path, and they came across a few white men travelling over the prairie, and they fought them for two or three days, and in the end they killed the last one of them and captured all their stock. They got a few horses and two or three mules, and of course some food and a little clothes and the men's arms. But one of the mules was loaded with four wooden boxes,

almighty heavy by what they tell. They couldn't get into them but they broke one of them open with an axe, and saw that the box was full of yellow buttons, and after breaking open each one of the boxes, they saw that each one had nothing in it but these same yellow buttons. But the queer thing about these buttons was, that none of them had eyes on to fasten them to the coat with. So they see they could not be used, and just emptied them out on the prairie and just left them there. Queer, wasn't it?"

Hugh cut tobacco, filled his pipe, lighted it and rode on, while the boys waited for him to finish his story. After a while, as he said nothing, Jack said, "Well, what happened then, Hugh?"

"When?" said Hugh.

"Why, after they went off."

"Oh, nothing happened," said Hugh, "they just went off, and after a while they got back to the village."

"Well, but," said Jack, "is that all of the story?"

"Yes," said Hugh, "that's the end."

"Well," said Jack, "I don't see anything queer about that."

"Well," said Hugh, "you see, them buttons was ten dollar gold pieces."

"Oh!" said Jack.

"I often tried," said Hugh, "to find out just where it was that those four boxes of gold were left, but I never managed to find out."

By this time they were almost at the point where they had left their horses the day before, and before long the three were standing about the place from

which the sack of gold had been unearthed. Hugh sifted the loose soil at the bottom of the hole through his fingers and discovered a few small nuggets that had escaped the boys, and then they made a careful search of the prairie near at hand. Nothing was discovered, and at length, Hugh told the boys to mount their horses and the three spread out riding back over the prairie, looking carefully over it and into all the ravines, to see if signs of any sort could be seen.

The search was fruitless, and at length, from the top of a high knoll, Hugh rode his horse in a circle to call the boys to him. They came galloping toward him from either hand, but suddenly, Joe, who had disappeared behind a ridge, rode up onto it and in his turn rode in a circle, and Hugh and Jack went toward him. When they reached the ridge, he had ridden down again into the hollow and was standing at the edge of a little green place, and when they got to him, they saw before him, the skeleton of a horse, which had long been dead. Hugh looked at it carefully and then said, "Male." Fragments of wood, lying by the animal's back-bone, were evidently the remains of a pack saddle, but nothing else was seen.

Hugh stood for a long time, looking at the skeleton, parts of which were scattered over quite a little area, showing where the wolves had pulled the bones about. Suddenly Hugh bent forward, and working his fingers in the grass near the animal's back-bone, drew forth a slender fragment of wood, which he held up before the boys' eyes. It was a part of an arrow, though the bent gray wood seemed little like the straight, clean shaft that they were accustomed to use. But by look-

ing closely, they could see the grooves, and a little search in the soil and among the grass brought to light another piece of the shaft and a rusted sheet iron head long since separated from the wood.

For a long time, Hugh stood staring at the bones of the animal before him, and then walking away a few steps, he sat down on the ground and filled his pipe and began to smoke. He said nothing, but kept his eyes fixed on the ground as if he expected to see, written there, something which would be an answer to his unspoken thoughts. The boys had thrown themselves on the grass by his side, and were watching him and waiting patiently, while the three horses fed about close at hand.

At length the pipe was smoked out, and Hugh raised his eyes and looked at the boys, as if he had just discovered that they were near him. Then his face twisted up into a kindly smile, and he said, "Well, boys, what do you make of it?"

"I don't make anything of it, Hugh. What is it?" said Jack.

"Maybe there's been fighting here," said Joe.

"That's right, my son," said Hugh, "that mule was killed by the arrow that we found, that's sure. I expect you both took notice that that arrow was broken about the same time it was shot, likely it broke when the mule fell. What I want to find out is, who did the fighting, and whether the man that lost the mule was the man that lost the gold, and where that man is now. I expect we've got to do a little climbing and do some more hunting. This is the way I figure it as far as we've got: Somebody was jumped by Indians

out here on the prairie, and made a run for the river. He had a pack animal and tried to keep it with him as long as he could, but the Indians caught up to him and shot at him and wounded the animal, and he had to let it go. I reckon he had the dust with him on his saddle, or else tied to his body somewhere, and just before he got to the edge of the bluffs, he dropped it. Maybe it was shot away. Then he went over the bluffs to hide or fight in the Bad Lands. Now I reckon, the best thing we can do, is to go back to where you found the gold and then go down into them breaks and see if we can find there, any sign of where a man got killed. All this happened a good many years ago, as you can see from that skeleton over there and the arrow that's in it, and we won't find any signs at all unless the man dropped something else. Maybe his horse might have been wounded and he had to leave that and it died, and maybe he himself got killed. Anyhow, we'll climb down there if you like, and take the natural way to the river and go a little ways. I don't reckon we'll find nothing, but might be such a thing as we would."

They mounted and rode back the way they had come, and then Hugh and Joe climbed down the bluffs, for Hugh said to Jack, "I want you to stop here, son, and look after these horses. It ain't noways likely nothing would happen to them, but it ain't good to leave your horses alone on the prairie without some one to look after them."

Jack sat for a long time, holding the ropes of the three horses and at length, as the sun sank lower and lower toward the west, he began to wonder whether

anything had happened. At length, however, he heard a sound of rolling stones below him, and soon Hugh came in sight, followed by Joe. They were a long way off and could not be seen very distinctly, and every now and then they disappeared in some ravine or behind some point of bluff. But Jack thought that Hugh walked queerly, and with his head bowed forward. At length they came in sight again, and for a little while were in plain view, and then Jack could see that Hugh was carrying some burden on his shoulders. As they climbed the last steep ascent, he could see that this was a young mountain sheep, and as he had heard no shot fired, he felt sure that Joe must have killed it.

So it proved. Hugh and Joe had searched a number of the ravines without seeing anything, and had turned back to climb the hills, when suddenly they came upon an old ewe and her lamb, and Joe's ready arrow had killed the little sheep.

"Well, son," said Hugh, "we didn't find any sign of that man, but your partner here made a mighty good shot with his arrow and we brought a little piece of meat along anyhow."

"Yes," said Jack, "when I saw you killed something, I knew it must be Joe for I hadn't heard any shot. Seems to me, Joe, you're pretty lucky with sheep."

"Yes," said Joe, "pretty lucky this time sure. I just had to fire quick, but I happened to hit him just in the right place."

"Well, boys," said Hugh, "let's tie this on behind the saddle and be moving, it's getting late and I've

got a pretty good hunger on. I want to get to camp."

Before long they were riding swiftly over the prairie, and though the sun had set, it was not yet dark when they reached the circle of the lodges.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CLOSE QUARTERS WITH A BEAR.

It was not long after this that the camp moved eastward, and stopped near the west end of the little group of mountains which rise out of the rolling prairie, and which, Hugh told Jack, were known to to the Indians as Bear's Hand. The summer was ended now and the nights were cool. From the little prairie lakes and the infrequent streams, the travellers often started flocks of ducks, and at night and in the early morning, the fine thin music caused by the swiftly beating wings of migrating water fowl, reached their ears. Once or twice, Hugh had said to Jack, "Well, son, before long, we've got to be jogging. I reckon the best way for you to get home, and maybe for me too, is to take a boat down the Missouri River, if we can get one, until we strike a railroad, and then you can go East and I'll go West."

"But, Hugh, what can we do with the horses? I don't want to leave Pawnee up here in the Indian camp, nor the new horse, and we can't take them with us on the boat, can we?"

"Well, I don't know," said Hugh, "we'll have to find out about that. I reckon, unless they're pretty heavy loaded, they can find room for half a dozen ani-

mals, and the way things look now, we've got money enough to pay their passage. Anyhow, it's a different thing travelling over the prairie now, from what it was when we came up here. There's more danger, and I've been thinking we ought to cross over to Helena and go south from there through the mountains, and try to keep in the settlements all the way. I heard tell last winter, that they were building a railroad from Salt Lake City up north to Helena, or somewhere near there, and if we could strike that, it would save us a heap of time. Anyway, I don't intend to go South over the prairie, the way we came; that country, now, is likely full of Indians and we might get jumped 'most any time. We'll have to wait till we get to Benton, to find out how things are, and I reckon, pretty quick, we've got to pack up and go in there. I think the camp is likely to move up on the Marias before long, and I'd rather stay with them than ride off alone with you."

Since they had found it, their gold had caused Hugh and Jack much anxiety. The sack which contained it, though apparently full of flour was very much heavier than any of the other sacks of flour, and the difference in weight would have caused any one who handled it, to wonder what it contained. They were careful, therefore, always to pack their own horses, and to leave an open sack of flour among their things, in order that, if John Monroe's wife wished to use any, she would go to that, rather than open a fresh sack. So far, no one had any suspicion of the existence of the gold in the camp, and Hugh was anxious that no one should know of it, because there were several white

men living with the Indians, about whom he knew very little.

It was now September. Jack had been in the camp more than two months, and besides the old men that he had come to know, he had also made the acquaintance of a number of young fellows of about his own age. From Joe and Hugh, he had learned a few words of Piegan, so that, often, he could understand what people were talking about, and sometimes mustered up courage to speak a few words himself.

One day, not long after his conversation with Hugh about returning home, the news was called out through the camp, that in three days the village would move over to Willow Rounds, on the Marias River, and would stay there a long time. When he heard this, Hugh told Jack that he thought it best, that from there, they should go into Benton and try to go down the river.

That evening Joe came to the lodge and proposed that the next day they should go up into the Bear Paw Mountains, to hunt deer. "Three others are going," he said, "Bull Calf, The Mink and Handsome Face. We ought to go early and I think we can kill some deer."

"All right, Joe," said Jack, "I'll go, and be ready to start any time you say."

"Well, then," said Joe, "let's go by the time the sun rises."

Bright and early next morning, the party started and rode up the mountain. It was not very long before they reached the pine timber, and soon after, they separated into two parties, Bull Calf and The Mink

going off on the south side of the hills, while Jack and Joe and Handsome Face kept up on the western slope.

After riding through the timber for quite a long time, they came to some little parks, quite surrounded by timber, with pretty little streams flowing through them, making, as Jack thought, the best possible feeding grounds for deer. After they had passed through several of these without seeing any game, but finding plenty of tracks and old sign, Joe, who was a little ahead, stopped his horse, raised his hand as a sign for the others to wait, and slipped off on foot through the trees. In a very few moments, he had returned, and signing them to dismount and follow him, he led the way through the silent timber. All the boys wore moccasins, and treading with hunter's care, went along like so many ghosts. No twig snapped under their feet, nor did they allow the branches or bushes to scrape against their legs. After a few moments quick walk, Joe turned, and making a sign for caution, dropped to his knees and crept through the low bushes to the edge of a little park. There, as they peered through the leaves, they saw a pretty sight. Three yearling deer were feeding slowly toward them, and were now not more than fifty yards away. They acted as if they had finished their breakfast, and did not seem hungry, but rather as if they were looking for a place to lie down. They would walk along for a few steps, and then one stopping, would nibble at the grass, while the others kept on, and then, perhaps one of these would stop and be passed by the other two. In this careless fashion, they came up to within

twenty-five or thirty yards of where the boys knelt, and then one of them suddenly folded his long, slender legs under him and lay down. The others stood by him, one broadside to the watchers, the other head on. Joe signed to Handsome Face, and then the two boys with arrows on the string, rose to their knees, and shot together. Each of the two deer sprang high in the air, and coming down, looked about with raised head and alert ears. The deer that was lying down, stretched his head up high and looked at them, and then about it, but did not spring to its feet. The boys could see in each of the two standing deer, the arrows buried nearly to the feathers. In a moment, the deer at which Handsome Face had shot, fell on the ground, and Joe's deer immediately afterward lay down.

Jack whispered to Joe, "Shall I kill the other?"

"Yes," said Joe, "kill him, sure." Jack took steady aim at the slender neck showing above the grass, and fired, and the deer's head disappeared.

"Well," said Jack, as the boys rose to their feet, and walked out toward the animals, "that seems to me like butchering. Of course we can use the meat, and we need the hides, but I don't think there's much fun in killing game that's as tame as that."

"Pooh," said Joe, "if they'd heard us, or smelt us, you wouldn't think they were tame; they'd have run off mighty fast, and we fellows that have arrows wouldn't have got a shot at them at all."

While Joe and Jack were butchering, Handsome Face went off into the timber, and soon returned with their horses. The deer were loaded on the animals, and they started to return to camp.

After they had begun to descend the mountain, they passed into a long, sloping valley, and here, as they were riding along, Jack discovered that the ground was covered with low huckleberry bushes, abundantly loaded with fruit. A halt was called, and the boys dismounted, and for half an hour were busily engaged picking and eating the delicious berries. While they were doing this, the sky clouded over and it began to rain a little. They mounted again and kept on down the hill, and presently, riding up onto a long-hog back, stopped there to look off to the southward and see whether they could discover their companions. To the south of this ridge was another valley, similar to the one that they had been going down. By this time the rain had stopped, but the sky was still overcast. The boys lay there on the ground, talking and waiting; suddenly Handsome Face stretched out his hand and touching Jack's arm, said, "*Aamo, Aamo, Kyiyu*,"—look, look, bears. The boys turned their heads in the direction that he was looking, and saw, far off in the valley to the south of them, three bears that had just come in sight from behind a little ridge. One was large and two small, and they were walking about in an aimless way that Jack did not understand.

"What are they?" he asked.

"Bears," said Joe; "old one and two cubs, pickin' berries." Jack realised now, that the bears as they walked here and there, and stuck out their noses, were gathering huckleberries, just as he had been doing a little while before.

"How'll we get them, Joe?" he asked.

"I don't know," said Joe. "Got to wait." Then he spoke some words to Handsome face, who answered him, and Joe went on speaking to Jack: "Handsome Face says, wait a little while and they'll go behind a hill and then we can get on our horses and ride down there and run them."

The boys lay there, a good deal excited, not daring to move, and fearing constantly that the old bear would see the horses and run away. But if she saw them, she must have thought they were buffalo, for she paid no heed to them, but went on with the young ones, picking berries.

At length, both the smaller bears passed out of sight, and then a little later, the old one. The boys crept on all fours to their horses, untied the deer and threw them to the ground. Jack tightened his saddle girths, and all three mounting passed down the hill towards the bears.

As they descended into the valley, the ridges, which from the height had seemed so low, began to appear higher, and to assume the proportions of quite respectable hills. Jack thought that he had marked the place where the bears disappeared, with some care, but before long, made up his mind that he had quite lost it. Joe and Handsome Face, however, rode steadily forward, as if they knew just where the place was, as of course they did. The advance was brisk, yet the boys did not gallop, and went as carefully as possible. Pretty soon, Jack could see that they must be getting near the place, for the boys used still greater caution, and at length, Joe stopped, slipped off his horse and went ahead on foot, while Handsome Face and Jack

remained behind. When Joe looked over the ridge, he saw nothing, and remounting, they passed on to the next one, where he took another look. Coming back very cautiously, he whispered: "They are just over the ridge; we can rush on them from there." From the top of the ridge they could see the three bears, unsuspicious as yet, and no more than fifty yards away, and as soon as they saw them, the three dashed forward at top speed.

Jack expected that Pawnee would be able to run away from the other horses, and he made up his mind that he would try for the old bear; but he found that the horse that Handsome Face was riding, was as swift as Pawnee, and the two kept along about even, both trying to overtake the mother. It was a race as well as a chase. At first the way was down hill and there, they did not in the least gain on the bear, but in a moment she began to climb the hill, and then they closed up on her rapidly. Handsome Face had his bow strung and a sheaf of arrows in his hand, and was making ready to let fly. It was impossible for Jack to shoot, as Handsome Face was directly between him and the bear, the boys riding nearly side by side, and only a few feet apart. All the while they were drawing up close to the bear; rather closer, as Jack thought, than was safe; but he had no time to think about this. Suddenly, Handsome Face drew an arrow to the head and shot, and almost as he did so, the bear whirled and charged directly toward the two boys. Handsome Face's horse turned at right angles, to rush away, and striking Pawnee with his chest just behind the shoulders, knocked him off his feet, so that he fell flat on

"HE HAD NO TIME TO THINK, HARDLY TO MOVE." *Page* 281

his side. As the horse went down, Jack jumped, alighting on his feet, but staggering three or four steps before he recovered his balance. He had not let go his gun. He turned to look to see where the bear was, and as he did so, he saw, almost upon him, a huge mass of hair and gleaming white teeth, flying toward him. He had no time to think, hardly to move. He threw up his gun, fired, tried to jump back out of the way, but his heel caught; something struck him a violent blow, and he knew nothing more.

All this time, Joe, whose horse was slower, had fallen behind the others, whipping and kicking with his heels, trying to keep up. The charge of the bear at right angles to her course, had enabled him to gain quite a little bit, so that when the beast threw itself on Jack, he was but a few yards off. He flung himself to the ground, and rushing up close to the side of the bear, shot arrow after arrow into its heart, until all his shafts were gone. It did not leave its prey, and throwing away his bow, he drew his knife, sprang upon the bear and thrust the blade again and again into its body behind the shoulder. Still it did not move; there was no response, not even a quiver of the muscle, and suddenly Joe realised that the bear was dead. He sprang to its head and catching the beast by its great ears, dragged its head off Jack's face and breast and called aloud to Handsome Face, who by this time had returned, "Hurry, hurry, let us help him if we can." The boys managed to drag the bear off Jack, who presented a shocking spectacle. His head, breast and shoulders were covered with blood, but he was not quite dead, for they could see the breath from his nos-

trils bubbling through the blood. Pulling him up a little way from the bear, they began to feel of him to see whether he was hurt, but in a minute they both broke down. Joe cried bitterly, saying, "Oh! My friend, my friend. I have lost my friend," while Handsome Face began to sing a very melancholy song. It was a sad time for both boys.

Suddenly, as they were crying, Jack sat up and said, "What's the matter? Oh! I know." Both Indian boys sprang to their feet and stared at him, for a moment, and then Joe, throwing himself on his knees behind him, put his arms around Jack, gave him a great hug. "Oh!" he said, "you're not dead, I thought you were dead. Are you hurt? Did the bear strike you?"

"No," said Jack, "I guess there's nothing the matter with me, except that I feel stupid and my head aches."

Joe and Handsome Face now felt Jack all over and he seemed to be unhurt anywhere except that on the back of his head, there was a great bruise which was bleeding a little. The blood, on his head and breast, was that of the bear, and when they went to the body and looked at it, they found that by the merest accident in his shooting, Jack's life had been saved. The ball had struck the bear in the end of the nose and had passed up through the air passages into the brain, causing instant death. The animal had been so close to Jack when he shot, that death did not stop her advance, and the whole weight of her body thrown against Jack had knocked him violently to the ground; his head had struck a small stone and the blow had

cut and stunned him. Except for a headache, he was as well as he had ever been.

Jack, for a little while, sat on the ground and nursed his aching head, while Handsome Face and Joe worked at the bear, taking off the skin. The two were very merry, and chattered and sang. Joe, in the exuberance of his spirits, made fun of Jack for having been thrown off his horse and knocked down by the bear, and altogether, was a very different Joe from the one who had been sobbing on the hillside only a few minutes before.

Before long the two boys had the bear skinned, and loaded on one of the horses. Then Handsome Face and Joe went back to the ridge where they had left the deer, put them on the horses and returning to Jack, the party started for the village. No one seemed to know what had become of the two bear cubs. During the excitement that attended the chase of the mother, the little fellows had disappeared. Handsome Face said that Pawnee had no sooner struck the ground than he had bounded to his feet again and had done this so quickly that he had got out of the bear's way.

Just as they reached the prairie, they heard shouts behind them, and looking back, saw Bull Calf and The Mink galloping toward them, each with a load behind him on his horse. When they came up, it was seen that Bull Calf had a young bear and The Mink a deer and when their stories had been told by both parties, it was learned that this little bear had run over the ridge and down toward the Indian boys who were coming down the mountain, and they had chased it

and killed it with their arrows. Certainly, this had been a lucky hunt ; four deer and two bears for five boys!

At a little brook, they crossed on their homeward way, Jack dismounted and washed from himself as much blood of the bear as he could, and after that felt much more comfortable, so that before camp was reached, though his head still ached badly, he felt quite like himself again.

That night, in the lodge, when he told Hugh the story of the day, the old man found fault with him for carelessness and bad judgment.

"You hadn't never ought to ride close beside any man that's trying to kill on horse-back. If it's buffalo or bear, it's all the same. If he has to turn off quick, he'll either ride into you or right ahead of you and get in your way. Besides that, you can't shoot at anything if a man is between you and the game, and yet you're riding along side of him with a loaded gun, likely as not pointing right at him, and if you're anyway careless, you're likely to pull it off and maybe kill him. There ain't no game that it's worth taking them risks for. Just as soon as you found that your horse was not good enough to pass the boy's, you ought to have fell behind and waited ; you might know that that bear wouldn't be killed by an arrow, and that your chance would come. Of course, there have been times when bears have been killed by arrows, old Pis'kun, here, killed a big grizzly once that way, but a thing like that don't happen once in a dog's age ; that's one reason why Indians are so afraid of bears.

"In the old times, when they had nothing but arrows, they couldn't kill bears at all, and lots of men that tried it got killed off. It's only since the Indians got some good guns, that they have killed any bears to amount to anything."

"Well, Hugh, I see now, since you explained it to me, that I was pretty stupid, but I didn't think about any of these things," said Jack.

"No, I don't reckon you did. You are a boy of course, and boys have a kind of habit of not thinking, but just running in and doing things, and not figuring on what may happen afterward. I'm mighty glad I wasn't with you, for I reckon if I had been, I'd a been scared a plenty."

"Well, but then, if you had been with us I guess it wouldn't have happened. You'd probably have called out to me and I'd have likely done what you said."

"Well, yes, maybe so. I'll say this for you," he went on, "that you've got a lot more sense than most boys I've seen."

"I ought to be learning something with all the things you tell me, and all the different kinds of trouble I keep getting into all the time."

"Well, you won't have much chance to get into any more troubles, because, now we are going to move back to the Marias, and then you and me, and maybe Joe will go into Benton and tend to our little business there, and then go down the river."

"Well," said Jack, "I'm mighty sorry to have the summer ended; I never had such a good time in my life. I thought last year, when I went back, that I never could have as good a time again, but this is better."

CHAPTER XXVII.

BAPTISTE LAJEUNESSE.

THE slow return of the village to the Marias River, and their journey along it to the camp, was uneventful. Hugh had let it be known among his friends, that on reaching this camp he and Jack would leave them, and the evening before this took place, a great feast was given by the head chief, Iron Shirt, to which a considerable number of the principal men of the village were asked. Out of compliment to Jack, Joe and Handsome Face were invited, and it was between them that he sat on the right of the chief on this great occasion. The speeches made were many, and in each one of them were friendly allusions to the two white men, who for some months past had dwelt in the camp. During the smoking of the last pipe, Hugh stood on his feet and made a speech in Piegan, in which he acknowledged all the kindness that they had received. Then, as they had previously arranged, the three boys got up and went about the circle, putting down before each one of the guests a package containing some present, which should be a slight memorial of their visit.

The making up of these bundles had occupied Joe and Jack for two evenings, and they contained about all the trade goods that they had brought from the South, so that when the bundles had been prepared,

all the red cloth, the beads, the tobacco and the handkerchiefs were gone, and of all the property that they had brought into the camp, there remained only a little food.

The next morning, long before they were up, presents from different people in the camp began to arrive at the lodge. There were great piles of buffalo robes, beautiful moccasins, shirts ornamented with beads or porcupine quills; skins and furs of one sort and another. More, as Hugh said, than they could pack on their horses. However, they made up their bundles and by borrowing a couple of pack horses from John Monroe, managed to load all their possessions, and set out for Benton. The flour sack, which contained the gold, was wrapped in a bear skin and placed on the bucking dun, under a great pile of robes.

Jack had arrayed himself in a suit of new clothing throughout. A beautiful shirt of antelope skin, heavily fringed and ornamented with quills, buckskin trousers, bead worked, and a pair of handsomely ornamented buckskin moccasins, with parfleche soles. About his hat was a strip of otter fur. His knife sheath was a large one of Indian make, studded with bright brass headed nails, and from a buttonhole of his shirt hung the gold powder charger by a buckskin string.

They started late, and it was night when they reached Fort Benton. However, Hugh managed to find his friend who owned the stable, and they put their possessions in it, their horses into the corral, and slept on the fragrant hay. At daylight next morning they were up, and after a time had breakfast. Hugh in-

quired when the bank would be open, and learned that this would not be for three or four hours yet. He told the boys, therefore, to go out and wander about the town if they wanted to, and said that he would stay with their property in the stable, until the time came to go to the bank with the gold.

Joe's childhood having been spent in Benton, he was a good guide for the town; yet concerning the old fort and the interior of the trading posts, he knew little or nothing. For some time they wandered through the streets and down along the river bank, and at length turned about to return to the stable. As they were passing along the street, Jack stopped before the window of a saloon to look at a mountain sheep's head with immense horns, and after he had looked at it for a while, and spoken with Joe of its great size, he turned to walk away, and as he did so, found himself standing face to face with a very tall man, whose long white beard reached nearly to his waist The stranger was not only very tall, but very broad as well, but seemed thin, almost to emaciation, yet gave one the idea of a person possessing great strength. He was neatly dressed in buckskin, which, though not new, was clean and in good condition, and was with ut any ornament of beads or quill work. As Jack stepped aside to avoid the old man, he spoke to him in a low, pleasant voice, and said: "The head is large, my friend, is it not?"

"Yes, sir," said Jack, "it's immense. I never saw anything so big, but then I haven't killed many sheep, in fact, I have only seen a very few."

"You are young," said the stranger. "You have

not lived long enough to see many things. Do you belong in this country?"

"No," said Jack, "I come from back in the States. I am just out here for a little while, and have been living this summer with the Indians up north."

"You are a long way from home. How do you come to be here?" said the man. "Young boys do not usually travel that great distance alone."

"Oh," said Jack, "I came with a friend, Mr. Hugh Johnson, maybe you've heard of him. He's been a long time in the country, more than forty years." The man seemed to ponder.

"Many years ago I knew a man so called; those were in the trapping days. We used to call him then, Casse-tête, because, once with a stone, he smashed the head of a wounded cow that was charging him. He had a strong arm and good luck." Jack was interested, and wondered if it were Hugh who had done this. He would have liked to ask more questions, but by the clock in the saloon, he saw that it was time to meet Hugh, and he thought, perhaps, that he could find this old man again, later, and talk to him, so he took off his hat politely and said good morning, and started to go on. But as he moved, the old man touched him on the shoulder and said: "Wait, friend; you have there," pointing to Jack's breast, "property that I lost long ago. Where did you get it? If you look at it, you will find scratched in the metal, my initials, 'B. L.'"

For a moment, Jack was almost dumb with astonishment, and then he said: "Are you Baptiste Lajeunesse?"

"That is my name," said the old man, "where have you heard it?"

"Oh, Mr. Lajeunesse, wait until we find Hugh, then we must have a long talk with you. Were you chased by Indians once, long ago south of the Bear Paw Mountains? And did you lose a mule there?"

The old man smiled rather sadly, and said: "Truly, my son, I was chased there, and I did lose a mule and many other valuable things which I have never been able to find. But one of them I see now on your breast."

Jack quickly untied the powder charger and offered it to Baptiste who waved it away. Then Jack asked him: "Where can we find you in an hour or two? We will come back here with Hugh, I'm almost sure that he is the man that you call Casse-tête."

"I'll be near here all the day," said Baptiste, "and if I'm not in sight, the man in the saloon can tell you where I have gone." Without a word more, Jack and Joe started on a run toward the stable.

When they reached the stable, there was no one there, but a man loitering in the street near by, told them that he had seen "their partner" going up the street a little while before, with a sack of flour on his shoulder. At once, Joe led the way to the bank nearby, and entering it, they could see, behind the counter, Hugh and another man, in earnest conversation. As soon as Hugh saw them he introduced them to Mr. Finley, the manager of the bank, as his two partners. Hugh had already taken out the gold. It had been examined and weighed, and three drafts,

each for $2,520.00 were now being made out, one to the order of each of the three.

Hugh told Jack that a few miles below the town, there was a steam-boat loading, on which they could get passage for Bismarck, and that he had made arrangements to have all their baggage hauled down to it.

"I reckon, we'll leave all the horses, except maybe Pawnee and your new horse, up here in charge of Joe. We can trust him to look after them carefully, and I reckon it's more than likely, that you may come back here again next season; and if you do, it will be a lot shorter for you to come direct and find your horses here, rather than to go to the ranch and have to ride up across country. That takes a lot of time.

"Of course, if you want to, you can leave all the horses here, we won't need them going down. And now, I reckon," he added, "we'll go out and buy some things. We'll stop in again to shake hands with you, Mr. Finley, before we quit the town."

They were scarcely outside the door. when Jack, who in his excitement, had hardly been able to keep quiet, exclaimed, "Oh! Hugh, we've found Baptiste Lajeunesse."

"Sho," said Hugh, "you don't mean it."

"Yes we have. He saw the powder charger and before looking at it, said it was his and that he had lost it a long time, and that it had his initials on it. He had not told us what his name was, and I asked if he was Baptiste Lajeunesse, and he said yes. Let's go and see him and find out all about what happened when he lost the powder charger; and oh! Hugh," he

said, his face falling, "suppose that gold belongs to him."

"Well, son," said Hugh, "if it's Bat, and he lost the powder charger and he lost the gold too, we are all just as poor as we were before you found it."

"Oh!" said Jack, "won't that be a shame, when we have been thinking that we were all so rich, and when Joe needs so many things, and you and me too, Hugh."

"Well," said Hugh, with a comical look of disappointment on his face, "I guess we all think we need lots of things that we haven't got, but somehow or other, if we can't have 'em, we manage to just live along in about the same way, and I don't know as it makes much difference, but I would like to see Joe with a good gun and I reckon we'll have to try to get him one somehow, whether we have the gold or not."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE LOST GOLD.

It was but a short walk to the place where Jack had left the stranger, and in a few moments they saw him sitting in front of the door. Hugh stopped in front of him, looked at him closely and said: "Well, Bat, how are you?"

"All right Casse-tête. And you?"

"It's a long time since you lost your charger, friend," said Hugh.

"Ah, yes," said Baptiste, "I never shall have another one as good. The one you saw me make and that the boy has on his shirt, was good for nothing I have had no luck since I lost the old one. At first things went well, and I thought I should be rich, but soon trouble came, and has been coming ever since."

"How did you lose the charger?" said Hugh.

"That morning when I left the fort, I went north to the big lakes and trapped along them, and one day, on one of the little streams, I found a piece of gold; a small piece as large as my finger nail. I began to look for more, and to wash the bars, and there, for a little while and in one place, I found much gold. I stayed there until my grub gave out and my ammunition too, for in crossing a stream my animal fell and wet my powder. I started to

come in for supplies, and one day, as I was travelling along, the Indians jumped me and I had to run. They had cut me off from the fort, and I ran east keeping ahead of them during the day, but at night they would catch up. At last, when I was southeast of the Bear Paws, my horses were getting tired and the Indians came so close to me, that they began to shoot. I had but a few charges left in my horn, and couldn't fight. Finally, they came so close that they killed my pack animal, and an arrow went through my shoulder. One or two of them had guns and kept shooting at me, but they did not hit me; they crowded me though, and now I had to run to the river to hide in the breaks, where I could slip away on foot without being trailed.

"This I did, but when I got in among the *mauvaises terres*, the Indians stopped behind, and then I found that my gold, which I had been running to save, was gone. I had had it on my saddle, and a ball had cut the strings and it had dropped off; also my horse had been wounded and could travel no more, and I was bleeding and growing weak. Along the shore I found a drift log, and that night, tying my gun to it, I pushed it off into the deep water and got on it, and floated down the stream.

"That was the last I knew for a long time. When I next had sense, I was in the camp of two trappers at the mouth of the stream, they call 'Judith.' They told me, that one day, weeks before, they had seen something queer coming down the stream, and at length, saw that it was a man on a log; one of the men swam out with a rope and brought the stick to shore,

and me with it. But they said I was crazy. They said, too, that I had many wounds that I had not known of and one of them was a cut on the head where a ball had glanced.

"Since that time my mind is no longer good. Sometimes, for a long time, I don't know anything. Sometimes I can't remember the things that happened yesterday, but the old things, those that happened before that time, I remember well; and so it is, Casse-tête, that I know you, even if your hair is white; but I have always thought of you as young and strong and a breaker-in of bulls' heads;" and the old man laughed pleasantly.

Jack and Joe did not understand everything of what was said, but Hugh, as he listened to this story, seemed to become very grave and sad.

"And what do you do now, Baptiste?" he asked. "We no longer trap beaver. How do you live?"

"Sometimes I ask myself that question, friend," Baptiste replied, "and I do not always know how to answer it. In the summer, when the boats are loading, sometimes I help to pack the robes. Sometimes, when the furs are brought in, they get me to come and help them look at them and say what they are worth; in that way I earn a little money, and my friend here, who owns this house, is kind to me. I sleep here always and sometimes when he goes away, I stay and answer questions for him."

"Friend," said Hugh, "when these Indians were chasing you, and when at last you turned to the river, did you have your charger with you?"

"I don't know," said Baptiste, "I did not know it

was lost until I got well in the camp at the mouth of the Judith; then I saw it was gone."

"And do you know when you lost your gold?"

"I don't know," said Baptiste. "When my mule fell, and I turned to run straight for the river, the gold was still on my saddle; before I got to the edge of the breaks, a bullet struck the horse, or the saddle, and when I stopped near the river the gold was gone. I can tell you no more than that."

"But, Bat," said Hugh, "did you never go back there to look for it?"

"I went back," said Lajeunesse, "but I could never find the place. When I got near it, things were always confused in my mind and I could see nothing that I knew again, although I had travelled over the country many times, and knew it well."

"Listen to me, friend," said Hugh. "Not long ago, these two young men and I were down in that same country. We found, close together, a mule that had been killed long ago with an arrow, this charger," touching the gold on Jack's breast, "and an old buck-skin sack full of gold. It may be that these things were yours."

"That is curious," said Lajeunesse. "The charger was mine for I know it well, perhaps the mule also was mine, but about the gold, who can tell. Perhaps it was mine, perhaps another's."

"Oh! Hugh," burst out Jack, unable longer to contain himself. But Hugh raised his hand for silence, and Jack stopped, though he was eager to try to prove to Lajeunesse that the gold was his, and that none of them had, or wished to have, any claim on it.

"As you say," said Hugh, "the gold may have belonged to any one; gold dust is much alike and a buckskin sack in the course of years, rots and disappears. Yet, after all, it seems likely that this may have been yours, since it was found near other things that were yours, and since you lost your gold at that place."

"Truly," said Lajeunesse, "it may have been mine, but it was lost long ago and could not be found, and now if you men have found it, it is yours."

"That is what we must now determine;" said Hugh. "We are here together, four persons, the only four, so far as we can tell, that know anything of this gold, or have a claim to it. Suppose, now, that we four were to decide that the gold belonged to you, what would you do with it?"

"Truly," said Baptiste, "if it belonged to me, I should not know what to do with it. I think I should give it to some one to take care of for me, for since my head has been bad, I might lose it or forget where I had put it, and then it would do me no good. If it belonged to you, Casse-tête, what would you do with it?"

"Well, Bat, I'm good deal like you, I don't know what I would do with it. I never had much money, not more than enough to buy supplies and have a good time, and this is more than one would need for that." Hugh stopped speaking, and thought for a little while and then said: "I'll tell you what I think would be fair: Suppose we divide this gold in two parts, and you take one part and the two boys will take the other; then we'll put yours in the bank and they will hire it of you and pay you rent for it as long

as they keep it. I think they ought to pay you, maybe forty or fifty dollars a month. If they'd pay you as much as that and gave it to you every month, you'd get along all right, wouldn't you?"

"Indeed, Casse-tête, I should think that I were rich if I had so much money as that every month, but you see this gold is not mine, even if it is the same gold that I lost; it has stopped being mine when I lost it. If I had lost gold pieces on the prairie and you had found them, they would be yours, and so it is with this dust. Why, then, should you make me a present of one half of it?"

"Partly because I feel sure you lost it," said Hugh, "and partly on account of old times; and partly because you now have nothing, though twenty-five years ago, there was no man on the prairie that was richer than Baptiste Lajeunesse."

"Truly," said Baptiste, "it is pleasant to think of the old times, and to meet one who remembers them. I have thought of you many times, Casse-tête, since I saw you last, and I am glad that we meet again. But what about these young men?" he said. "They partly own this gold, what do they say about giving it away?"

"Why," said Jack, "I say you ought to have it all, and not half of it, as Hugh says." Joe said nothing, but smiled as if he agreed with Jack.

"Now," said Hugh, as he rose, "that gold was left at the bank; I'll go up there and see that it is divided in two parts, and we'll find out what the people there will pay you for the use of yours, then I will come back here and let you know." Lajeunesse waved his hand, and they went out.

On the way to the bank, Jack said, "But, Hugh, why didn't you make him take all the gold?"

"Well, son," said Hugh, "you see, he had lost it for good and he never would have heard of it again if you boys hadn't found it, and we hadn't brought it in. I think that luck and that work entitles us to half of it, but there is another thing more important than that. You see, the old man has partly lost his mind, he isn't fit to take care of any property, and if we would give him that sack of gold, it would be just as he says; he'd leave it lying out on the sidewalk some time, and somebody would pick it up and walk off with it, or he would put it down somewhere and forget where he left it, or he'd give it away. It wouldn't do him no good nor us neither. What I'm going to do is this, if you boys agree; I'm going to deposit half these drafts that we got for the gold to your credit but we'll see that the interest is paid to him every month. Then as long as he stays here, he'll have a living and yet he won't be able to spend the principal. Then if ever he dies the money will be here to the credit of you two boys, one half to each."

"Well, but," said Jack, "suppose he's got any children or a wife?"

"Well," said Hugh, "he ain't got neither, without he's married since I knew him and that ain't noways likely. But we can find out about that anyhow."

When they reached the bank, Hugh explained the matter in detail to the manager, who was an old resident of Fort Benton and knew Lajeunesse well. One half the money was deposited in the name of Jack

and Joe as joint owners, the interest to be paid monthly at the rate of one and a quarter per cent. per month to Lajeunesse. This would give him nearly $50 a month. Returning to Baptiste, they told him what had been done, and while he and Hugh were talking it over, Jack untied from his shirt the gold charger and when the opportunity came, offered it to the old man.

"There can't be any doubt," he said, "Mr. Lajeunesse, that this is yours, for it is marked with your name and you should take it." The old man smiled kindly as he took it in his hand and looked at it thoughtfully, then he handed it back and said, "No, my friend, in these days I don't use such things, and besides, it brought me bad luck. If you like it, keep it always to remember a man to whom you were kind. I shall think of you, Casse-tête, and of your boys, many times from this on. Every month I shall have a good reminder of you."

They sat all day chatting together, Hugh and Baptiste doing most of the talking, though sometimes they addressed the boys. About the middle of the afternoon, Hugh rose, and shaking hands with Baptiste, said that it was time to go. The two old friends walked slowly toward the stable, while the boys ran ahead and found a wagon hitched up and their property partly loaded in it. It was arranged that all the horses should be left in Joe's care, to be kept in the Piegan camp, and that Hugh or Jack would write him to say what should be done with the stock; if he heard nothing from them, he was to keep the animals [illegible] next summer, when it was

hoped Jack and Hugh would again go to the Piegan camp.

The ride down to the point where the steamboat was tied up was rather a melancholy one. Jack and Joe sat together on the back seat not saying much, but holding fast each other's hands. When the boat was reached, all were busy for a little while transferring the goods to the deck and then the captain came to Hugh and said, "Well, you got here just in time; there's a little more water coming down to-day, and I'm going to start now just as soon as we can cast off the lines."

"Well, Joe," said Jack, "I'm awful sorry to go, I've had the best time I ever had in my life, and a good part has been owing to you. I'll never forget you nor the Piegans, and if I possibly can, I'll come back again next summer."

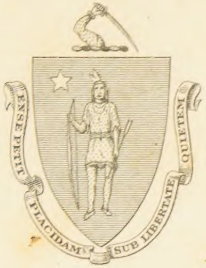
"Good-bye, my friend," said Joe, "I wish I were going with you, I hate to have you leave me. I feel like crying. Come back next year if you can."

"Hurry up," said Hugh, from the deck of the vessel, "they're casting off the lines."

Jack turned and ran over the gang plank and stood beside Hugh, and as the vessel passed out into the stream and slowly moved around the point, the last things that he saw were the tall figure of the old trapper and the slender one of the Indian boy, standing side by side with their backs toward the sinking sun.

END.

Board of
Free Public Library Commissioners
of
Massachusetts



This volume is the gift of the
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
through its Board of
Free Public Library Commissioners
State House, Boston